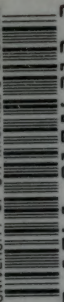


UNIVERSITY OF ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE



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A
Young Woman's
Problems



A Young Woman's Problems

By
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A YOUNG WOMAN'S PROBLEMS.

I.—INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

In the beginning, and through the centuries, there has been a rivalry between the sword and the pen. Which is the mightier has been the question. Rightly the decision favors the pen. The sword is trenchant and quickly hurls souls to their eternal destiny. The pen, incisive as the blade, has left a mark deeper and broader than the sword. "One drop of ink makes millions think." The pen shapes the activity of mankind when the sword lies idle in its sheath. The scabbard must at times put the sword to sleep. The pen never slumbers.

Nowadays, and for many cycles past, there has been emulation of another kind. There has arisen a jealousy between the pen and the pulpit. Whether to write is more prolific than to speak; whether it is better and wiser and more fruitful to stereotype one's thoughts than to convey them to the multitude by word of mouth, is a matter for discussion which may make one pause. Have printed sermons done as much as spoken discourses? So much may be said in favor of either side that it might be preferable to consider the topic as one which admits of illimitable dispute, and, therefore, neutrality is the most justifiable attitude.

It has been elected that on the subject before us the views to be upheld are to be declared from what might be called the pen-pulpit. Before entering any pulpit many ideas have to be canvassed, to be sifted, to be weighed, to be rejected, to be culled. The selection of ideas is always to be made with a view to the audience to be addressed. Stretching before one in the assembly which these talks

may hope to reach, is a very large gathering. Were one term sufficient to describe those whom it is especially expected to muster, most certainly would that term be employed. These lines are to be addressed to young women.

Young women is a classification which admits of many subdivisions; in fact, is almost as catholic in its comprehensiveness as the expression "woman." What a large field in the history of the race has been preempted by women! When the tide of human generations began stirring she is found at the very threshold. When the first husband prevaricated the first wife shared the guilt, nay more than shared the guilt. She instigated the revolt. Immediately, she disappeared under a cloud which for centuries impeded her progress and thwarted the noble purpose for which she was made—the co-partner of man. The cloud not only impeded her but obscured and falsified her. She became the victim of misunderstanding and misrepresentation. She easily lost her hold on her primary dignity, and was graded an inferior being. She seemed for ages to readily acquiesce in the awful consequences of her first weakness. Among all the peoples before the coming of Christ, she moved on lower levels. What she would have become, what she would have descended to without Christianity, forces upon us a conclusion too terrible for contemplation. In the ineffable plan of redemption, however, was the germ of her rehabilitation.

The Jewish people were chosen as a race to prepare the coming of the divine liberator. He was to be divine and human; He was to be God and man. As a man He was to have, like the rest of the sons of men, a human mother. This mother, by the very nature of things, was to be as worthy of her son as it was possible for the mother of such a son to be. She was the last of a line of women conspicuous for elevation and nobility of life and

character—so conspicuous, that even before the nativity of Mary the old and common thoughts about women began to halt and receive a change. In the days before the Church there were no such women among the Gentiles as Jephtha's daughter, as Judith, as Ruth, as Esther, and a few, a very few, others whose names have become household words. So inextricably joined are the interests of women with those of men that the regeneration of one could not take place without the emancipation of the other. So close are the relations that they stand and fall together. It is hardly a question, though it is almost generally broached, whether a man's influence for good is greater than that of a woman. There should be no doubt in this matter.

Man, in spite of the views which are so often entertained, is the head of the family. It belongs to him to control and direct, yet he, for reasons which are never of the best, seems to have sold his birthright, to have relinquished the reins to hands which, no matter how strong, must always be weaker than his, if he puts forth the fulness of his vigor. It is a change, or rather an exchange, which was never intended by a wise Providence.

Women in many instances have splendidly fulfilled their compulsory mission and achieved notable results. These results, however, no matter how beneficent, are dwarfed in comparison, with the consequences which would have accrued had the hands of both the man and the woman been at the wheel and both pilots been clothed in all the wisdom and strength which fidelity to their combined duty would have insured them. For example, a good father may do much toward the welfare of his children, and all things being equal, may accomplish, and should accomplish, more than an unaided mother. So, too, may a mother, loyal to her task, produce wonderful effects when unsupported by a recreant father, but never so wonderful as

the father alone, when he brings into action the fulness of a paternity enlightened by faith and assisted by grace, and never will the success of either alone be in any way comparable to the prosperous termination of combined effort, invigorated by high principle and incessant self-sacrifice. To put it more plainly: A thoroughly Christian father, unassisted, will advance more auspiciously alone, than a thoroughly Christian mother under the same circumstances. Weld, however, into one unit of uncompromising action, husband and wife, and there will be revealed an agency startling in the blessings which will issue therefrom for time and eternity, for Church and for State. In all this everything that is in the least derogatory to woman is repudiated.

A glance over the field of modern life in this twentieth century is startled by the mass of evidence in favor of the preponderance of feminine over masculine influence for the general welfare. All the data compel the declaration that the number of good women is larger than that of good men. Viewing things as they are, and viewing them without censure of any kind, there is room for congratulation that just now the hand that rocks the cradle is the woman's, and not the man's. Far otherwise would the condition of things be had womanhood continued in the deplorable predicament in which it was found at the time that Peter and Paul surrendered their lives for Christ in Rome. It seemed as if a tide of corruption had carried along during the ages before the advent of the Saviour the mass of womankind, driving it hither and thither, on rocks and shoals, and then throwing it up bruised and palpitating, a thing to turn away from, an unsightly, horrid, loathsome thing, every vestige of immortality gone, an octopus creeping on the shores of time, full of venom, ghastly, gruesome, murderous, raucous, sodden, a thing to be hurried out of sight, a

thing to haunt one, and surely not a creature of God, made to be the mother and the wife and the sister and the friend of man.

Beyond expression are the designs of God. Beyond conception is His power. Beyond admiration and beyond all effort of gratitude is His love for man and for woman. Christianity is as full of miracles as the evening sky is full of stars. Bright and conspicuous among all its wonders is the marvel of the reestablishment of the sex.

Woman was weighing down humanity, just as man was trampling down woman to depths so profound as to leave hardly any hope of her ever rising again. No man, untouched of prophecy, would ever have been bold enough to predict her resurrection from such profundities of moral squalor and corruption. The jetsam and flotsam of the whole pagan era, uncared for, flung away as worthless, the willing victim of the cruelest and most putrescent lust, it was hard to see within the contaminating carcass any germ of a higher vitality. Brutalized to a degree which even modern depravity can with difficulty fathom, hope of resuscitation had vanished. Yet for the very existence of the world, was her revitalization necessary. Had no interposition from above come down to the help of the race, it is no exaggeration to fear that in the general misconception of the bonds essential to the propagation of mankind there might have dawned a day when the extinction of peoples would have become an accomplished fact.

Woman had rung her own knell on the borders of Eden. She was to blame in a very large measure for her downfall, for the loss of all her privileges. Every daughter of Eve was justified in pointing to her as the cause of all the disasters, moral and physical, which have so persistently accompanied them in their lamentable career.

Lo the repristination! A woman had been the fruitful source

of the decay of all her sex. Like another sun upon the noon came a very daughter of Eve, who was to clasp all womanhood in her arms, and in that contact was to breathe into her sex a new life. The drooping lilies lifted their heads once more in whiteness, and the blush came to the roses that had faded. She was clothed with the garments of salvation and with the robe of justice, as a bride adorned with her jewels. She came forth as the morning rising, fair as the noon, bright as the sun. She was the brightness of eternal light, the unspotted mirror of God's majesty and the image of His goodness. She was full of grace and the Lord was with her. She came a virgin and remained a virgin, and to-day is the queen of angels and virgins in the halls of God. She brought forth a Son and they called His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted, is, God with us. He that made her rested in her tabernacle. He that made her became her Son. Scarcely had she appeared on the horizons of this world than the work of the regeneration of women began. They called her Mary. She was conceived without taint of original sin. By divine design she escaped the curse of the first Eve. With Mary came the redemption of woman, and the redemption of woman was plentiful. From the first eighth of September on which the Immaculate Queen, the queen of purity, was born, all womankind in some mysterious way felt the touch of life. In her journeyings with her Son, in her gentle companionship with her sisters, she drew maidens with a magnetism that is not of this world; she drew maidens in multitudes to her.

She inoculated them with her own sense of the dignity of womanhood; she thrilled them with a love of purity, with the ambition of keeping themselves unspotted from the world.

Before the first age of the Church had closed, the brightest names in the annals of the martyrs were the names of those whose aspira-

tions were to become brides of the heavenly spouse, who spurned the allurements of men in order to appear before Christ with their nuptial raiment unstained. They did not hesitate, nay, they were eager to seal their virginal pledges in their own blood. Woman the whole world over began to feel the influence. Wherever the apostles went they brought the sweet odor of virginity with them.

Turn over the pages of history, and the same emulation of the special characteristics of the virgin mother is manifest. The history of Catholic womanhood is the chronicle of purity, whether virgin or conjugal. The contrast is striking. Before the advent of the mother of Christ, sensuality abounded; after her coming mortification of every description and the forswearing of all fleshly delights, even the most legitimate. Of course Christ was the regenerator, but always cooperatively with His mother. She was the predestined type of perfected woman. Like a bright jewel she shines on the outstretched forefinger of all time. She is pinnacled in presence of all the ages.

This rapid review brings sharply to notice not merely the powerful influence of religion, but also the possibilities which lurk somewhere in every woman, the possibilities of ascension. It might be called her power of self-recovery, it might be called her recuperability. The twofold consideration that God is always in His heaven and caring for His children and that women are susceptible of the highest moral flights has brought about the penning of these pulpit talks. There is much being done for women and much more to be done. They should be an object of special interest to every priest in whom there is a breath of the apostolic spirit. While every thought conveyed in these lines may be of profit to all women, they are mainly directed to the *young* woman. Their compass is even narrower.

It may be supposed without any injustice that there is a class of young women, who are more favored than others by leisure and the gifts of fortune. These have time at their command, time in which to reflect, to read, to listen and to consult. These may be considered as being privileged in many ways, for whom guidance constant and saving may be easily procured. Libraries are within their reach and lecture hall are theirs to go to.

But there is another class of young women. They may be styled the average young woman. They form a very large contingent. Theirs is a very busy life. They are occupied from morning until night and their leisure hours are few indeed. They, unless remarks are particularly addressed to them, may seldom have an opportunity to hear advice, except along general lines. To them will it be especially profitable to have their lives brightened by counsels shedding light upon the ways and means within their reach of making their lives not only useful but beautiful. They are confined to their places of business or they are detained within the limits of the family circle harassed by drudgery and a thousand household cares. There is a lurking danger for them of despondency and discontent. They are beset by the temptation of letting things manage themselves. They entertain no hopes of a change from the weary rut of every-day, commonplace living. They have no aspirations, no ambition. They look upon life as a grinding process. They grow old and tired before their time. Life has very little meaning for them. They hardly live, they drift merely. They become listless and complaining. Religion itself possesses no very high significance. Yet there is much for them in this world. God loves them as He loves His other children. Surely it will not be useless for them to understand existence as God intended it should be understood. They may learn to avail themselves of a thousand

incidents in their experience which seem to have no purpose. There is happiness for them all, only it must be sought for where alone they can find it. It is not bootless for them to develop conscience, to strike the proper attitude toward their environment. There is contentment discoverable in their relations with their families, with their parents, their brothers, their sisters, their friends, male and female. They will be helped to an understanding how to conduct themselves in the critical periods of life. They will find sermons in everything—in their amusements, their work, their surroundings. They will recognize that they may crown themselves with success, that no matter what betides, God is their God, that He is in His heaven, and that it is and will be all right with them not only hereafter but even here.

II.—THE MEANING OF LIFE.

Fixed ideas are the bane of human existence. By a fixed idea is meant the stubborn adhesion to an opinion, no matter how many reasons against it may be alleged. The idea or view is lodged so firmly in the mind that it can not be unseated. This fixed idea is at the bottom of prejudice, bigotry, jealousy and envy. It has originated family and national feuds. It is accountable for a very large portion of the ills which afflict the race. There is a vast difference between a man of one idea and a man of a fixed idea. One is rightfully ambitious and is bound to succeed; the other is fast tottering toward lunacy, and helps make lunatics and unmake wise men. The one gets his view from the outside, from contact with the world, from environment, from education, religious or otherwise; the other generates his thought from his inner self, consciously or subconsciously. The one is open to conviction and advice, the other is self-opinionated, and has nothing but contempt for the tenets of others.

Many other differentiations might be enumerated. Suffice it to say, that the fixed idea is detrimental to all sociability and comfortable living. It is a barrier to all progress. It is in the way of a correct appreciation of things as they are. It is an obstacle to the proper launching of life. It is a "black-hand" conspiracy against the happiness of mankind. The man of one idea is not contumacious. He will not change his idea. It is based on conscience. It is rather a principle, and a high one, than an idea. It will suffer on his part no mutation willingly. He may modify it or, rather, he may

adjust it to new circumstances and will subject it cheerfully to the laws of environment.

The saints were men and women of one idea. Their object was perfection. Yet the exterior manifestation of their one purpose changes with the cycles.

What has all this to do with young women? Much, very much indeed. These young friends of ours are as liable as any other class of individuals to become the prey of a fixed idea. They are as apt as any one else to hug this phantom to their bosoms. They are just as disposed as many others to hold some pet theory which may serve as an apology for what might be called their eccentricities of thought and speech and action. A fixed idea is sublime as a resource for those whose conduct may leap beyond the bounds of the irreproachable. They rail at life. They see nothing in it for them. There is something rotten in existence. Life is not worth living, and, as a consequence, life holds nothing within its stretch that is worth the having or the doing. The practical results of this doctrine, if it may be called doctrine, are not far to seek. Certainly under the tenebrific radiance of such a theory are produced the germs of every moral disorder. If a fixed idea were kept in concealment, if it were confined within the dark recesses of the gray matter in which it lurks and whence it springs, if it affected its individual parent only, if it were forbidden to hold communication with the outside world, then it might be allowed to die, unhonored, unwept, and unsung. But it struggles with all its innate stubbornness for deliverance, and as it goes it grows and spreads infection. It finds congeners in so many brains. For a worthless product it is most prolific.

However, it must not be forgotten that it is a weed, and hence expansive and harmful. The laws of its development are codified in the parable of the tares. It is like the crocodile of Herodotus:

"From the smallest of eggs it becomes the largest of animals." The alligators of old Nile never were so rapacious, never consumed so many victims as this fixed idea. Coiled up beneath a human cranium, it hath a multiplicity of sinuous folds. When it leaps therefrom fully armed, it wears only one suit of armor, one monotonous continuity of scales. It is called cant. Lo! how cant overruneth the world! How it has enfolded all creation in its embrace like the fabled monster of some of the cosmogonies of barbarous nations!

Cant is the volume in which all the fixed ideas of the universe are writ. Inscribed in largest letters is the cant about human life, about its origin, and its purpose. It has pressed literature and talent and wayward genius into its service. All that has been predicted about life by the colorless, whining lips of cant may be reduced to one formula. That formula declares that "Life is a mystery." Behold the solution of all the riddles with which human experience is confronted. It is a mystery, therefore unknown and unknowable. It is a mystery, therefore unintelligible. It is a mystery, therefore it has no meaning. It is vain, therefore, to reach out for the significance of life.

What, then, is to be done? The young woman stares with wondering eyes into space, seeing many things but comprehending nothing. As she sits at the contracted window of her small experience, a cry goes from her weary bosom—a cry asking, What is life? What does it all mean? and the cry is carried afar off on the palpitating bosom of the vast expanse, and no answer comes. There is only returned to her the echo of her cry. Everything sends back to her the same question, What is life? In her confusion, ready at her beck is that most lying of all teachers, cant. How ready and how varied and how contradictory are the answers to the query: What is life? Listen:

"But what am I?
An infant in the night,
An infant crying for the light,
And with no language but a cry."

Here is another answer. We are:

"But eddies of the dust
Uplifted by the blast and whirled
Along the highway of the world
A moment only; then to fall
Back to a common level all
At the subsiding of the gust."

Very little satisfaction in such responses. Very little uplifting, very little encouragement. Rather nothing but what is most disappointing and depressing. Is not this the cup which the novel and the lecture, which the philosophy of the times, that is the twentieth century philosophy, presents to fevered and trembling lips?

One who seems to so many to be the standardbearer of whatever truth is known for the betterment of existence tells the inquirer:

"It is all a mystery,
But our brothers have not read it.
Not one has found the key;
And henceforth we are comforted,
We are but such as they."

These ideas have become fixed in so many minds, in the minds of so many both young and old. Nor has the young woman in any grade of life come out scatheless. They are living in a germ-laden atmosphere, and they are open to its contagious influence. This is a reading age. Everybody reads. Everybody reads every-

thing, or almost everything. Romance, however, sways this vast empire of readers. The novel of to-day is generally dedicated to this cant view of life. The tendency of the average reader is to absorb what excuses her in her methods and theories of life. If there is one dangerous and relaxing lesson, the novelist of to-day teaches, it is the lesson which inculcates the notion that this life of ours is vapid, flat, unprofitable, stale, meaningless. The young woman's whole nature is permeated with this idea. How discontented and unhappy she is made thereby she alone can tell.

What is she tempted to do with her life? Will she trample down all these unworthy thoughts and rise into the serene air of an innocent life? Will she become blasé, tired of everything and wait listlessly for the end and pray and yearn for its speedy approach? Will she flutter into dreamland and half sleep away, in the building up of impossible castles, the splendid energy that somewhere or other is dormant within her? Will she let herself drift? Will she become the prey of circumstances toward or untoward? Will she, and this is so often the outcome, will she shatter everything that is precious, fling away everything that is priceless, make one desperate plunge, and live a life which will be a round—oh! how short a one—a round of sensual pleasures and toss off all that is high and noble with a glass of wine and a hurrah?

It is terrifying to think that it is in her power to do all this. She has the power to unfold her wings and fly to the blue and the sun. She has it in her power to crawl and creep. Worse than all, she has it in her power to break away from her best and dearest bonds, and swiftly and surely become an outcast and struggle with her mates for the husks with which swine are fed. While this all testifies to a dreadful possibility, it also evidences an alternative which is replete with consolation.

The young woman has it within herself never to reach this extreme degradation. As she wills, so her life may be. She is the architect of her own destiny. There is a world beyond the vision of this world. There is a sky bluer than the sky which overarches us all. There is a world and a sky of the soul in which the sun may be ever golden and the stars ever gleaming. It is the higher creation in which the soul may move. It is a world beyond all sin—a world which may be the battlefield of fiercest fights, but likewise of the securest victories. It is the world in which the realest life may be lived and in which existence finds its truest meaning. And what is this meaning? What is the significance of life—of everybody's life, of your own individual life? Thank God, there is no mystery. A light illumining everything is shed everywhere. You know that you are. You know that you came into being without any cooperation on your part. You know that you are here. You have your life. It has been given to you. It has, if you will, been thrust upon you. This life has been given you by your Creator. It is a gift. It has been bestowed upon you by the Maker, not as a curse, but as a blessing, nay, as the blessing of blessings. It is yours to do with as you please or as the Maker wishes. You have your choice. You may make of it a malediction if you will, because you are a free agent.

But such was not the intention of the Creator. He gave it to you a beautiful thing to bring it back more beautiful to Him. You may make of it a most hideous thing. You may make of it a thing He will not recognize nor care for. You may render it loathsome in His sight. There are many things which accompany life in its transit from God to God, from time to eternity. It may be attended by pleasure, by misery, by wretchedness. It may pass through the environment of poverty or wealth. Its path may be

through honor or obscurity. It may be diversified by incidents of many kinds. It may be as monotonous as a thrice-told tale.

All these things, while they may modify, never change the meaning of life. Its significance is so clear. You know what God desires from you, and that purpose of His no circumstances need control. You may control everything. In poverty and drudgery and fatigue there is your life, your own very life. It is not within the power of any circumstance to thwart the design of creation. Low down or high up, you may always be mistress. All things it is not given to you to always understand. This one truth never fades. It is as immovable as the foundation of the globe. Wherever you are or whatever you are, you may fulfil the mission of existence. The laws of conduct are fixed and immutable. You are certain of this one thing. You are certain that life is a journey. On that journey you bear with you always a soul that must not be tarnished, a conscience that must not be sullied. On that journey there is a road to keep and from which you need never stray. The straight line of duty marks out the road. No matter how many things you may be ignorant of, of this fact you can never be ignorant. The pathway shines brightly before you. It lies clear in the radiance of the headlight of conscience. You are poor and you see no way out of your poverty. You are alone and you see no way out of your loneliness. You are suffering and you see no way out of your suffering. You fail and you see no way out of your failure. The companions of your childhood are walking in pleasant paths; there is no pleasure before your path. Your soul in other days was musical with the voices of ambition and hope. The ambition has been frustrated and the hope has taken wings. The outlook is very dreary, and no matter how far you peer into the future you catch no token of a break in the clouds which hang so heavy and dark above you. It is to be an eternal

treadmill for you. You will have to go up and go down the same streets. You will have to climb and descend the same stairs. You will have to look at the same faces, and your fingers will grow old doing the same work. There will be no merriment, no revelry, no feasting for you. The thorns will be sharper than your few roses are soft. So it was in the beginning. So it is now. So it will be until the end.

The heart is weary, and the bones ache, and health gives way, and the closing scene of all is the sick-bed in the gloom of poverty and desolation. There will be no loving touch to close your eyes in death, and the grass that covers your grave will be disturbed by no mourner with brimming eyes. There have been no flowers strewn in your pathway while alive, and there will be no wreaths placed in affection or remembrance upon your tomb.

You ask, Can any meaning attach to such an existence? You ask, What does it all signify? Natural questions these, and yet there is an answer to them all, a satisfying answer. The solution of all this our young women will not find in the cant of the day, nor in its philosophy, nor in its romances, nor in its art, nor in its allurements.

Yes; there is an answer to these tearful queries, an answer which is neither vain nor empty, an answer which, if properly understood, will irradiate all this weariness, an answer which is as a fountain springing up into eternal life.

III.—THE MEANING OF LIFE.

To us, what must be considered as a very happy expression of the illustrious Cardinal Newman, there seems to be connected with these talks a "peculiar felicity." The "peculiar felicity" is that they are being addressed to their audience during a season when the whole Catholic world is preparing for the golden jubilee of the Immaculate Conception. It will always be the glorious boast of women that the most perfect of all the creatures of Divine Omnipotence belonged to their sex. Adam and Eve were created in perfect innocence, but they did not emerge from their fiery ordeal, an ordeal more fiery than it is in our power to imagine; they did not emerge scatheless. They were spendthrifts of their magnificent prerogatives, and as a consequence limped to their destiny not garbed in the regal raiment of innocence, but short of all their royalty, and crept rather than strode, crept in the shadows of the stain of guilt and penance, to the God who had been so lavish of His treasures upon them. So superb were they in the attire in which the Lord had robed them, and so splendid was their abode and so radiant was the path before them, that it is not hard to fancy that the angels crowded around the crystal battlements to welcome their arrival and proclaim them the almost unparalleled achievement of the Almighty. And lo! the celestial spirits who surround and glorify the Throne waited cycles and cycles for their advent. And when the ascension summons knocked imperiously at the golden gates Adam and Eve entered, but entered not as princes entitled to sovereign seats, but as prisoners rescued from

bondage and gracing the triumphal entry of Him who "led captivity captive."

Jesus Christ was both man and God, was not a mere creature, and therefore men can not claim Him entirely as their own. The creature made in her entirety from nothing and holding the highest place assignable to creatures alone was a woman. From the first moment she was thought of in eternity by the mind of God, in the instant of her conception, in her birth, during all the wearisome years of her sacrificial existence, her being was one undimmed brightness. The light of God's face shone in upon her always. Her whole career was one expanse of light. She had been in the arms of God's love always. From her initial entrance into life the golden radiance of immaculateness was her mantle, and she is the only pure creature whom it never repented God to have made. She was His from the beginning, and to-day she is the one whom it delighteth the King to honor.

Among the splendors which make heaven a something which the eye has never seen, which the ear has never heard, which it hath not entered into the mind of man to conceive, is the dazzling glory of the Virgin who was assumed in the flesh into the halls of bliss, the glory which the elders and the martyrs and the virgins and the angels are singing in tones the faintest echo of which has not reached these zones, and one note of which, when it falls on ears of man or woman, makes them yearn with a bitter aching for the joys that are to come. "Blessed be her holy and immaculate conception!" This jubilee, therefore, is full of inspiration and beckonings and summonses to all young women.

The wonderful richness and potency of the Church! It has, this grand Catholic Church, lifted just a corner of the curtain which hangs between time and eternity, and behold there is the descending of the

ray down which steals a light that has never shone on earth or sky. It is in the glimmering of this light that it will be profitable to study the meaning of life. Mary was the descendant of kings, and she is an inmate of a home which has nothing to distinguish it but poverty and obscurity. The royalty of her race is no protection for her. The circumstances under which she becomes a mother are harrowing beyond the power of pen to describe. Her life for thirty years was one of indigence and God knows what else. She was among the very poor. Labor was the law of her existence. She was the object of suspicion—perhaps, who knows, of contempt. Her son had not whereon to lay His head. He was snatched from her by a ruthless rabble. He was maltreated. He was killed. She wept over His mangled corpse. She was a widow and He was her only son. When He disappeared the light of her life was taken from her. The question may be put to the world, was there ever one who, as girl, young woman, mother, widow—was there ever a woman whose experience covered as many possible trials and miseries as this lone woman whom we call Mary the Mother of God, the Immaculate Queen of Angels? She lived every woman's life. On reflection it will be impossible to point to a road of woman's suffering down which she did not travel. What is the pressure which forces the deep sigh from the bosoms of so many young women? Perhaps there is no calamity which seems more unsupportable than the calamity of poverty. Was not Mary poor? Reputation is very dear—God be praised for it—to young women. The loss of reputation our blessed Mother sustained. In fact, there is not a note in the gamut of affliction which she did not strike. Hence is she our tainted nature's solitary boast. Hence is she the perfect pattern on the mount. There is not a trial of womankind conceivable to which she was not sub-

jected. Was life a mystery for her? Full well did the meaning of life come home to her. As it made itself clear to her, so may it be transparent to you.

Let us look at life squarely. Let us look at it as it has so far presented itself to us. Let us contemplate the facts. The greatest of all facts immediately concerned with our individuality—the fact upon which our first conscious thought reflected—is the fact of our finding ourselves alive and surrounded by a multiplicity of objects. We discover ourselves the one little drop of water in central ocean upon which all the currents from north, south, east and west were exerting their pressure. We felt victimized somehow or other by the environment. Some of these forces—they were many, they were cruel, they were against, they were for us, they were within us, they were without us—some of these forces we could control; in the presence of others we seemed to be powerless. We understood that some we had to oppose with all our might. We understood that if we did not contend against them we would be hurried on to the precipice and over and into the whirlpool, and thereafter, being driven around and around, we would be sunken for ever. Certainly no mystery in all this. There were wonder and bewilderment, but no mystery. We knew that we were—we knew that in some unknown way we had been dropped into these pushing waters, but it was clear to us at the same time that there were shores on either side of us, and that it lay within our strength in spite of the buffeting rapids to turn either to right or left and reach land. We knew that we possessed ourselves, that we were within our own control, that we could make or unmake ourselves as we pleased. In that knowledge there was strength, there was light. The shore we made for was rockbound or fringed with verdure. It made no difference. It was the shore.

And there was a yearning for the shore. No matter how often we were tempted to float down with the rapids, there was a subconscious knowledge, a half-knowledge, that it were better to strike out boldly for the shore.

This understanding of things cuts the ground from under the feet of the cantists who proclaim that life is a mystery. Mysterious it is in some of its features. The genesis of life and the processes thereof are not among the few things that are known. Creation has been for many a puzzle from the beginning. Hence a thousand blind and inert theories have been floating through the centuries. Hence pantheism and evolution have been invoked in vain for a solution of the problem. Everything has been called into question. Minds otherwise acute and penetrating have probed the so-termed mysteries and have come back from the search empty handed. Science has never pushed its mysteries further than the zone of facts. When science begins to theorize, it is lamentable to behold how it stammers and sputters. The pole and the open sea have as yet been undiscovered. The ships all come home with prows and decks smashed, and in the masts and on the sails and in the rigging there is nothing but the sway of the eternal ice fields.

Yet on all these uncertainties there has been shed a light which irradiates everything from centre to circumference. Whence come we? Faith answers: From God. Whither are we bound? Faith replies: To God. The meaning of life in this infallible teaching becomes clear, becomes easy to read. We are satisfied at once that life is the transit from God to God. The origin of evil is so deep to fathom. It is not so beyond the reach of plummet when the strands of the line we let down are woven by the hands of Faith. We, now, in this enigmatic exist-

ence, may never learn the how and the why of the circumstances by which we are environed. We may never learn here below how it is that we are hemmed in by so much adversity, so many trials, so many temptations. We may never know how we are dogged by poverty and suffering, how few of the good things of the world fall to our lot, how so many are favored by the gifts of fortune, how so many succeed where we fail. These things we may never detect the manner of. But the why of all this is not far to seek. We, when faith whispers the information, will understand so much that is hidden from the lucky ones of earth. Life for us will mean this, and in meaning this will mean much. What life means is that we have been fashioned by God out of nothing. Hence God owns us body and soul. Hence He may do with us as He pleases. Were it to please Him he could without any opposition on our part fling us back into our original nothingness. He made us not in hatred but in love. Our being has been given us for something worthy of the Maker. We are, therefore, for a purpose which all the combined agencies of the universe can neither formulate nor reach.

This life and everything in it is the road to that high destiny. We know that we are on the pathway to God. The words of that great master of the spiritual life, which is the better life, the words of St. Ignatius Loyola, may be inserted here. They reveal the absurdly termed mystery of life. They are the statement which covers all the expanse of existence. They have changed the current of many a life which otherwise would have gone awry. They have made saints in every walk, saints in every degree in the human family, in every position, in all environments, saints canonized, saints unknown. It was not a new proclamation. It was as old as the centuries before his time; it was as old as eternity. He

stated it in his own magnetic way. It sprang from his brain, full armed, caparisoned from head to foot; it went, lance in couch, to do deeds of prowess in behalf of souls, of Mother Church, and of God.

It runneth thus, does this fundamental fact concerning all that we have and are: "Man has been created to praise the Lord God, to show Him reverence, to serve Him, and by so doing to save his soul. All else on the face of the earth has been created for man, to help him in the reaching of his end, the end for which he was made out of nothing. Whence it follows that man must use these things when they help him for this purpose and refrain from their use when they become an impediment. Whence we should acquire indifference towards all created things, whenever use of or abstention from is permitted our free will and is not forbidden it. As far then as it is within our power we should not desire health rather than sickness, richness rather than poverty, honor rather than obscurity, a long life rather than a short one, and the same in all other things, wishing for and choosing the things which are surest to lead us to the end for which we have been created."

What a sunburst! How it searches out and illumines all the dark places of life and that most hidden of all things, the human heart! Where is the mystery? In neither direction is there mystery. There is nothing unintelligible for those who follow the narrow or for those who follow the primrose path. The first know the "mystery" of life, but exact all its sweetness. The second know the mystery of life, but quaff all its intoxicating draughts, and dance drugged to the precipice over which is temporal as well as eternal death.

In one phrase the whole life of man lies mapped out before us. What is there here in this wayside-inn where we are sojourning? What is there but long life, or short life, sickness or health, fame or

obscurity? In one breath how little is made of all or any of these things. They vanish into thin air. They are as nothing in themselves. There is only one view to be taken of them all—how do they advance us in the great, the glorious purpose of God in our regard? We may find ourselves at once in the light of this old yet ever new formula.

How do the Catholic young women, in whose behalf these reflections are made, consider themselves circumstanced? With many of them is it not true that they are the victims of ill health, of obscurity, or poverty? Are they to remain effortless in their condition? By no means. Let them strive in resignation and patience to regain health, to emerge from the shadow, to reach out for abundant means. It is not among the teachings of the faith which is theirs, that they must succumb to adverse circumstances. But when they make the effort and it proves fruitless, when ill health and poverty still cling to them, when difficulties thicken, when the clouds hang low, when they are in the vale and the companions of their youth are on the height, is there no hope, no refuge for them? Must their feelings grow gloomy because of their surroundings? Is there no rift in the sky where the blue peeps through?

Let them look to the purpose of it all. In sickness and in poverty, in suffering and in anguish, their feet will be on the hills if they only know that they are fulfilling the ends of existence, the chief end of being; that they are on the road that leads to heaven, that their will is animated by one overmastering desire, the desire to push through thorns and thistles and weeds to the great open where God is on His throne, with His hands outstretched full of rewards and holding a crown for them. This is the great meaning of life, that no matter where we are,

how we are, we may always be where God wills us to be, and doing the work He wishes accomplished regardless of how insignificant everything may look to us. "They also serve who stand and wait." This is not only the meaning but the blessing of existence. Infinitesimally small we may appear to ourselves and worthless, yet our energy struggling onward to God on the path of His will becomes a note in the great chorus of creatures without which the concert of praise would be something lacking.

"Ours not to reason why,
Ours not to make reply,
Ours but to do and die."

IV.—WORK.

Work is the lever which moves onward and lifts upward the world. It was imposed by a justly angered Creator as a penance upon his guilty creatures. Yet, like everything which proceeds from God, it was not all punishment; it was not all a curse. It was touched at the very core by divine mercy. It was and is a blessing in disguise, this primal malediction. It is the law of the universe. Everything is in labor. Activity is everywhere in nature.

It is in the earth struggling all the bleak winter long, in an effort to garb itself in the glory of the flowers of the field and in the raiment of opulent fruitage and golden harvests.

It is in the sea, in the multitudinous laughter of billowy ocean, rushing with its tumultuous tides around all shores, laving and cleansing and purifying them.

It is in the flash of the lightning, in the roar of the thunder, in the conflict of the winds. It is in the sun and moon and planets and stars traveling their appointed ways in their orbits, "centric or eccentric." It is in the snow and the rain and the rime.

It is not in a mad ecstasy that the Psalmist calls on everything to bless the Lord. His song was the chanting of labor's chorus in hosannas to the Highest. The command to work penetrated sonorously to all inanimate nature, and inanimate nature alone responded with unrepining compliance to the behest. It was fitting, then, for the prophet to call upon the obedient agencies of nature to help him praise his Jehovah.

Man only was recalcitrant since the beginning. Man only refused to address his hands to their task. Indolence, idleness, sloth are

among the most imperious human instincts. To do nothing, to enjoy the sweetness of repose, is the aim of so many of the sons of men.

Yea, and also of the daughters. Hence any writing penned without some allusion to work would leave very incomplete these instructions for young women. Are they not pointed at the average young women, that is, the young women who belong to the great army of toilers? Would those cohorts were largely more numerous! Work is a solution of the so-called riddle of existence. It is the meaning of life. Life is insignificant and insipid without it. Even in the early golden hours, in nature's prime, when the Lord walked with his first creatures in the passages of the garden, there was no exemption from labor. "And the Lord God took man and put him into the paradise of pleasure to dress it and to keep it" (Gen. ii. 15). Our own part in the Psalm of life thus reads the puzzle:

"Trust no future, howe'er pleasant;
Let the dead past bury its dead;
Act, act, in the living present,
Heart within and God o'erhead."

Yet what is chiefly the burden of the young woman who sits and grieves and wonders and bemoans her lot? What is the burden of her complaining? Her heart is heavy within her because circumstances condemn her to labor. She looks with envious eye upon those who are more favored by fortune and who are not called upon to do anything but to eat and drink and clothe themselves and be merry. It is well for her to remember many things. It is well for her to hearten herself up by the reflection that things are not what they seem, that under laces and silks there is many a stifled sob, there is many a heart nigh unto breaking for that there is no peace, no happiness, no joy within it. Yet such a consideration, if it brings

any consolation, is ignoble. It is always beneath one to solace oneself by the thought that others are as miserable as oneself. There is a higher plane to travel upon. There is no disgrace in honest work. Be it ever so menial, it ennobles when performed with a becoming spirit. What that spirit is may be easily ascertained. It is a disposition made up of many elements. It will repay analysis.

It is refreshing at "morn, noon, and eve" to behold the young women of our cities on their way to their work, in their short resting hour, or coming back to their homes. It may be that the hand of destiny is laid heavily upon them and that they feel all its weight. Yet how few of them show it! There is an alertness, an "abandon," a cheeriness about all their movements. They do not stoop beneath the load of their toil. Everything that savors of care or worry or fatigue is cast away. Take them all in all, of course there are exceptional cases, but take them all in all and the first impression that one carries away is the impression that there appears not the slightest doubt that they are not discontented, that they are satisfied, that they are resigned to their position in life.

Resignation is the first element in the make-up of that becoming spirit which is under analysis. This accepting things as they are, this submitting to circumstances which can not be controlled, is a panacea for heartache and weariness of soul. It is so rational. It may climb higher than the rational. It may ascend to the supernatural, and lo! on that height flow the crystal springs of peace and contentment and happiness. When the young toiling woman strikes from her patient soul the grand chord of Amen—so be it! Thy will be done! Then the angels bend over the battlements of heaven to listen and to admire, yea, and perhaps to wonder. In that one aspiration of the soul is completed the apotheosis of labor. In the

midst of such music the eye brightens and the feet quicken and the fingers are rendered defter. Body and soul work in harmony and take wings and make flights, and innumerable messages are interchanged between the toiler and the great Master of the universe. God is the supreme worker, and all faithful workers cooperate with Him. Philosophy and theology call God not merely a worker, but an act. He is essential activity. He was active in the eternities before He waved the sceptre of His omnipotence over chaos until it teemed with existence. He has been in action ever since conserving and upholding and guiding His creation.

In the fulness of time came among men His divine Son. For more than thirty years Christ cast His lot among the workers. Until the hour struck for Him to begin His public life He helped His foster father, and when the head of the family was taken from mother and Child, He became the breadwinner for Himself and Mother. There has been no poverty like the poverty of Christ. During His three years of the upbuilding of His Church, God alone knows how often the Son of man had not whereon to lay His head, how often He was more shelterless than the birds of the air or the foxes of the earth. God alone knows how often worn out and supperless He went up on the mountain to spend the night in prayer. His own word is our guarantee for these statements. Why do we not accept the words of Jesus literally? Why do we not believe every syllable of every one of His utterances? Such an acceptance of His words would let us into a better understanding of His character, make us love Him more ardently and follow Him more closely, and render us glad in any way to resemble Him. He has taught us that there is nothing degrading in work. That on the contrary, whatever the task may be, no matter how lowly, it becomes ennobled if we accomplish it in the spirit with which

He toiled and moiled for us. His certainly was resignation, but resignation glad and joyous.

Yet your resignation must not degenerate into mere passivity. It must not wall out legitimate ambition. It must not become a loathsome apathy. It is always within your right to look for a betterment of conditions. It is not wrong always to have the eyes on the main chance. The struggle for advancement is not ignoble. On the contrary, it is to be encouraged, not only as a right, but as a duty. Sometimes, however, this desire, otherwise lawful, of getting ahead oversteps bounds. It breeds illusions.

In a recent issue of one of the popular magazines there was a pictorial article on the evolution of the American girl. She begins at the lowest rung of the ladder. She mounts until her cleverness wins for her a place of trust and responsibility in the capacity of private secretary to the president of a great corporation. Her star is in the ascendant and she becomes the wife of her former millionaire employer and lives a life of ease and luxury.

Such an evolution, our dear young women, it must be told, is very far from being among the probabilities, and is only remotely among the possibilities.

An evolution of another kind, a retrograde evolution, is more often to be chronicled. A young woman may gain the confidence of her employer, and the favors he showers upon her are only too often the prelude to wretchedness and disgrace.

God preserve you all from such an evolution! Beware of illusions. Settle down to your work and refrain from indulging in the mawkish occupation of day dreams.

Proceeding further in the analysis of the spirit which ennobles work and renders it not only bearable but joyous, we meet another element. It is the element of fidelity. Fidelity is very often its own

reward. Not seldom does it draw to the young worker the eyes of her employer, but opens up a path for future advancement. Between the employer and the employee there always exists a contract, tacit or explicit. This entails obligations on both sides. On the side of the employer it enjoins adequate and just remuneration. On the part of the employee it urges perfect performance of the allotted task. It obligates her to give all the attention and all the time called for. It is a question of justice and of honesty. Your time for so long belongs to the employer, and you become dishonest in proportion to the amount of time you give to anything or anyone outside your master. You are supposed to make his interests your interests. Such is your agreement. Any infidelity thereunto is culpable. Perhaps resignation and fidelity may sum up all that goes to the development of the perfect toiler. If they are not the sum total, these two features will certainly suggest the remainder. In fact, resignation with higher sense holds in embryo all other qualifications.

Patience is one of the suggestions. Possess not only your souls and your bodies, but your hearts with all its yearnings in the embrace of that sterling virtue. How long must I continue working? the young woman is often heard to say. How long? When will it end? Must these feet of mine keep this weary treadmill awork forever? A natural question this, but who can answer it? Who knows? Perhaps marriage may come to the rescue. Perhaps. Again, who knows? The thought intrudes here, or rather the query, will marriage solve the question? Will marriage put an end to the toil? May not marriage, which is the beginning of a new life, be at the same time the commencement of harder work, of greater hardship, of more unendurable trials? The future is such a sphinx that she will make answer to none of these things for us.

Day by day! There is the maxim. Sufficient for the day is the

evil thereof. Why take thought of the morrow? Provide for the morrow as much as to-day will allow, but be not solicitous. The constant prayer on the lips should be, "Just for to-day, O Lord." It will not be difficult to understand that work, all work, whatever be its kind, approached in this spirit will be fruitful in courage and contentment, in happiness even, such as it may be found here below, and, peradventure, in success. At any rate life will not be frittered away in useless brooding and repining, in ungrateful reproaches against Providence. The high places of life are very few and are for the very few. The way the world jogs along there must be poor and there must be rich; there must be workers and there will be idlers. The majority, the incalculably large majority, of mankind fall into the ranks of the employed. When one falls outside that line it is the exception. Is it any wonder then that your way of life must stretch there where the spinners spin and the weavers weave? As for happiness it would be no exaggeration to say that what little there is of it is more generously distributed among the middle classes or among the poorer ones, than it is among those whose wealth brings every treasure and every pleasure to their feet. The rich are not always to be envied. "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown." This has been verified since the beginning, and will continue to be verified until the end.

Rise, therefore, to the elevation of your faith. Fling away, therefore, all murmuring. Build up within your hearts a citadel of peace, and let no discontented thought invade or destroy it. It is better to be a St. Zita than a Maud Muller. What a light hangs, like a halo, over the splendid careers of our working, our Catholic women in the past in this country! The servant in the household charmed by her fidelity. Her cheerfulness and her virtue charmed away bigotry and prejudice and brought whole families to admire, and then to

embrace the religion which made her what she was. She became the trusted adviser, the confidential friend of her mistress. She swayed the whole domain. There was the girl in the mill, in the factory, in the shop, in the store, whose advent put an end to all ribaldry, to all uncharitable gossip. She was as impregnable as a fortress. The vile and the wicked were forced to respect her. She created sunshine in dark places. She was a recognized force for the higher evolution of the race. She was an apostle. Certainly a noble destiny this. And there is the consolation that no girl who is employed may not lift herself, with the reserve of modesty, up to this lofty pinnacle. These are a few of the inspiring ideas which Mother Church has in keeping for her children who work among the toilers of the world.

V.—MOTIVES.

Any effort to shed light on the important phases of life, any attempt to moralize on the paramount duties of existence would be futile were it to set aside the consideration of those factors which play so momentous a part in all rational activity, and which are called motives. Motives are the compelling forces of all human pursuits. Without them nothing that is done is performed. Take motives out of the field, and all energy disappears. They are the germs of all enterprise. They control the currents of every mortal agency. No operation has completeness or even inception without them. They are not determinants merely; they are coefficients as well.

They may be defined as ends, purposes, objects. They are the power without which inactivity will hold sway, and inactivity alone. What the sun is to life they are to all action. They are light and they are heat as well. All this verbiage amounts to a repetition only of the very evident conclusion which all human experience must reach, and which is that the motive calls into being all our acts. Perhaps a simpler statement would be that motives are the ends we have in view when we think, or desire, or speak, or act.

If this were all, it would be worth our while to ponder. But there is more. They are really the best part of our work. Not only are they the mainspring, but they irradiate or darken the entirety of whatever we undertake. Strictly speaking, they are the only things we contribute to whatever task we perform. So true is this that all merit, all demerit, all imputability is decided by them. They are our very own. They label all our deeds. They are of our own fashioning,

and it is really in virtue of our motives that what we do is called ours. By your motives shall ye be known.

The angels in their first Christmas hymn, that hymn in which they proclaimed the meaning of redemption, chanted peace on earth to men of good will. Good will is the intention. By our intentions are we to be judged, and by nothing else. Our success is very little in the sight of God, but our intentions are everything. So we perceive that motives call our actions into being, sustain those actions, and prepare those actions for reward or punishment. How unwise, therefore, would it be for us to disparage our intentions, to minimize them, to be guided by the very false maxim that it is of little consequence about the motives, provided the work is done, that it is the "how" of my effort and not the "why" that counts. Doubtless the "how" can not be disregarded, but the "how" takes its color from the "why," and no matter what of deftness it may include, its work depends totally on the "why."

Motives suggest another remark. As they make or mar a work, so they make or mar the individual. Is it too much to say that, as a woman's motives are, so is the woman? Motives are the expression of character. If your motives are noble, are you not noble? If low, are you not low? If selfish, are you not selfish? If narrow, are you not narrow? If broad, are you not broad? What is your aim in life? Is it your ambition to walk among the high ones of earth, those, that is to say, who keep the straight and difficult path, whose conduct is unimpeachable, who are unafraid of the eye of men or angels or of God? Then look to your motives. Elevate them, and you elevate yourselves. They are wings hidden in every soul, which every one may find and open and use for flights high above the sordid interests of earth.

It is perceptible, therefore, that life is broadened or contracted, up-

lifted or lowered by motives. With regard to motives, as to every other object of thought, there may, there does exist ignorance or misunderstanding. It is possible to exaggerate the importance of a motive, to dwarf, by giving it too much preponderance, other accessories or congeners of human action. There is a maxim which holds high favor in the world at present, as it has done at all times. It is a maxim which neither the Church nor those valiant defenders of her rights and doctrines, the Jesuits, have taught, but have always repudiated.

Pay attention to the utterances that are so frequent in the prevalent expressions of modern action, whether the utterances appear in newspapers or magazines or fall from the cultured lips of society's leaders or votaries. The apology they offer for whatever in their conduct can not be sanctioned by the most unenlightened conscience is that their intent and purpose were good. Evidently unshaken in their minds is the axiom that the end justifies the means. Were a thorough investigation of the views which emanate from worldlings of high or low degree made, this would be discovered to be a maxim not entertained by Catholic theologians or any representatives of the Church, but rather one adopted by those hostile to our religion not only in one sphere, but in many spheres, in everyday life, in politics, in business, in government, yes, and in the pulpit. So we must hasten to conclude that, though the end one holds before them as a goal to be reached is the incentive of all action, yet in every act there are circumstances to be considered which also play a very prominent part in settling the morality of what we do.

Besides the end proposed by the agent, there is a tendency which is inherent to the action itself, and there are, moreover, circumstances which are its concomitants. If the act, by its very nature, is unrighteous, say the act of lying, then, no matter how exalted the

end of the agent, and no matter how apologetic the circumstances, the whole act is vitiated and to be execrated. These three things go hand in hand, that is, the morality of the act weighed in itself, the purpose of the agent and all the attendant circumstances. If they all ring true, then approval follows; if anywhere along the line there is a false note, then in its totality must the action be condemned. Yet in all these remarks it may truly be said that nothing has been detracted from the glorious place which motives occupy relatively to human action or the morality of mankind.

Loftiness of motive will generally achieve loftiness of conduct, will elicit from the individual a course of procedure which will stamp her as a woman trustworthy, howsoever conditioned she may find herself. If there be any flaw in her behavior, it will be attributable rather to want of knowledge than to perversity of will. Generally the high motive will furnish high comportment. Strong resolve accompanies exalted rectitude of intention. Commonly she who wishes the best produces the best. Where there is adequate religious instruction there will hardly be conscious subjection to the formula that the end justifies the means—a formula which affirms the detestable doctrine that the end, when elevated, clothes with its own dignity everything that helps it, no matter how low or sordid or criminal it may be.

Why, it may be asked, why all this prolix and uninteresting discussion, and what bearing has it on the text of the sermon, and what aid does it bring to the uplifting of young women?

These talks, let this be the excuse, these talks are not exhortations merely. It is not their purpose to excite transitory emotion or strike out in your souls a sudden but not lasting spark of fervor. It is, first and above all, their intention to address themselves to the intelligence and, through the intelligence, to the heart. They aim at

laying down incontrovertible principles, which are always in demand and which are pillars of strength in critical moments, and which, united with prayer, will bring victory over every temptation which may await the footsteps of young women in their journey through life.

There is no act of yours which falls outside of the influence of your intention. This intention, or this motive, while it is the first touch which stirs energy, is also the last point which is reached. As philosophers state, the motive is primarily in the purpose, but, last of all, in the execution. Pleasure moves you to a certain manner of conduct. The desire for it starts you on your course, but when, if ever, it is reached, it is reached last. It is a kind of power house. It sends the trolley down and brings the same trolley back. In the light of these statements, you may ask yourselves the question which, in the Gospel of "Gaudete" Sunday, the Pharisees put to the Baptist: "What sayest thou of thyself?" What do ye say of yourselves? Remember your motives. Put yourself on some or other road. Adjust yourself for all the vicissitudes of life. What do ye say of yourselves about the road? What do ye say of yourselves about your adjustment? The underlying fact that looms up before every individual, before every young woman, is the fact of her existence, the fact that she is alive, the fact that her eyes see, her ears hear, the fact that all her sensations are awake, that her heart beats, that her lungs breathe, that her mind is alert, that her will is buoyant, that she is a compact mass of vitality, of activity, of longings, of desires. She feels that she is a delicate part of the complicated machinery of the universe. She knows that from somewhere there has come an imperious mandate to go. She can not stand still. She must be incessantly in motion. The motion must be forward or backward, to the right or to the left. What says she of herself? Is there any

north star to which she can look in these compulsory journeyings which are the law of her existence, some star by which she may correct the chart, take her bearings and discover where she is, toward what bourne she is traveling, whether she is on a path whose currents will lead her to the haven or dash her to destruction? What is the aim of her existence? What is she making out of her life? What is she living for? She can not but have an adequate estimate of her own value, of the priceless cargo she carries, of the precious destinies she is freighted with. What is she doing with it all? The rapidity with which the seconds impel her toward some terminus must hasten her inquiry, must compel her to give some satisfactory reply to her whereabouts, some consoling answer in the dark uncertainty through which the speeding moments are driving her, either to rocks or to shelter. While she is sweeping the horizon for the polar light which is her guide, how many leagues she has been carried away! No time, therefore, for hesitation. The decision must come at once, or it may be too disastrously late.

Whither is the prow of the little vessel of her being heading? At once she may have the solution. Is the motive which is leading her hither or thither, on and upward, or rearward and down? Is she living for God? Among her motives is there one which is perverse and errant? The motive is a cable. It depends on its strands, and its strands depend upon its threads. As the thread is, so is the cable. The cable can be no stronger than its weakest thread. By living for God it must not be understood that at every moment she must, by some positive movement of her will, make her action veer directly toward God. That would be asking too much. It would be asking more than God asks. It would be demanding more than is demanded of the recluse or the contemplative.

These words are addressed to young women who are struggling

in the busy arena of the world. If, in response to the question, Are they living for God? it is in their power to reply that not at every step in life are they looking at their compass, that many and many a time the cares by which they are harassed absorb all their attention, but that in spite of the hurly-burly in the beginning of each day or in the very beginning of their rational life, in some way or other they steered in the direction which their religion pointed out; that, in spite of storms, they have knowingly never deviated from the course they mapped out for themselves, that they can not remember a moment when they forsook that direction, that whenever they had a breathing spell they always cast an anxious glance about them in order to be sure that they were still pointing as they started out to travel, that they have never allowed any created thing to usurp God's sway in their affections, that they never knew an instant when they hesitated in their allegiance, never knew an instant when they were inclined to betray His interests; if so to keep on living and so to die is the yearning that dominates them entirely, then let them be assured that they are being led by the true polar star, and that, sooner or later, mingling with its light will be the shining of the splendors of the great white throne. Happy, happy women whose energies are dedicated to this one aim of existence! Happy because they have to solve the riddle of existence, happy because their little life is expanding into a larger reality, a life pushing back horizons, a life strewn with heroic deeds unnumbered and unsung save by the angels, a life begun in this insignificant day of earth and ending in the measureless spaces of infinity. Happy, happy women!

There is no mystery for them. Somehow or other God is meeting them at every span of their way. They greet Him joyously, whether His outstretched hands are gift laden or whether they shed trials, sorrow, or affliction. They acknowledge Him as Master every-

where and at all times, and they bow to His will. They understand how large a blessing He bestowed upon them in giving them life, how larger a benediction He imparted to them in prolonging their existence and how inconceivably more spacious benefits He is preparing for them there where the voyage ends, there where the lesser sparks of time are swallowed up in the light of glory—that supreme irradiation, that participation of the light by which God sees Himself and which lifts up the feeble mind of man to a divine condition in which God Himself is seen face to face, and we become like Him.

VI.—MOTIVES.

As motives contribute more largely than is generally understood toward rendering life noble or ignoble, happy or unhappy, contented or otherwise, a further consideration of them will be profitable, and therefore excusable. Let it never fall out of mind that as motives are, men and women are. Their careers are as low or as high as their aims are low or high. Not only their careers, but their whole individualities take on the complexion of their aims. Complexion is rather a feeble expression. It would be more accurate to say that their entire being is interpenetrated by their motives. They affect not surface merely, but depth as well. Put the case as strongly as is possible, the truth is that men and women are their motives. A woman's motive and a woman's self are interchangeable terms. The most perfect woman, the Mother of God, is an illustration of this. "Be it done unto me according to thy word." This had molded her previous career, it molded also her after life. She understood the value of a motive. She took no risk. She identified her aims with the will of God because she was sure that God's motive must be of the best, and she understood that a life influenced by His will—and His will includes His motive—must be the best life—intrinsically the best—no matter what it appeared on the surface—no matter how it might be viewed by the judgments of men. Her motive rendered her life divine because it was inspired by the Divinity.

Immediately we behold a standard. High above us, yet within our reach, is the motive of motives—the will of God. It elevates and

transforms. It begets contentment with any and every lot. It illumines all the dark places of existence. It solves all riddles. It rides over all difficulties. It gives a new and lofty significance to all vicissitudes. It strengthens the arm and brightens the eye. All terrors fly from before it. It is sky and sun and moon and stars during the brief period of the soul's terrible struggle. It is peace. It is rest. It is consolation. It is balm. It is a panacea. It fills life with fragrance. It blesses here and hereafter. If you wish to understand yourselves, grasp your motives. In holding these, you hold yourselves in your hands, and you may study and know yourselves. This self-knowledge is above all other earthly science. It serves to humble one, and in so doing it makes for better living. Take your motive with you down into all the recesses of your being—into all your thoughts, all your words, all your deeds, all your emotions, all your desires, all your longings. Visit with it all the nooks and crannies of self. The hiding places of self are so innumerable, the masks which self wears are too many and too hard to penetrate. Carry your motive everywhere, into all your haunts, into all the highways and byways of existence. Open the slide of this wonderful lamp upon all your relations with others, upon all the attitudes you assume toward people and things as you make your progress toward the grave. Your motive is a searchlight. There is no probe for wounds or for the missiles which make wounds, there is no probe like it. Hold the light steady, hold it long. Blink nothing. The floor of the sea has no more marvels than those revealed under the unwavering and penetrating radiance of the luminosity of a motive.

Perhaps you will be startled by the revelation. You may be made dizzy by the vastness which intervenes between the heights on which you fancied you were walking and the levels upon which

you find yourself. You may be obliged to acknowledge that you are a stranger to yourself; that you are entirely unrecognizable; that had anybody photographed you as you see yourself, you would have laughed at the picture as a libelous caricature. But then you are, dear young women, then you are as God sees you, as the angels see you, aye, and perhaps as men see you, as everybody sees you, save yourself. The spectacle is not one that caters to vanity, or not one that puffeth up. It is humiliating, perhaps shockingly so, but it need not be discouraging. On the contrary, it may, if the knowledge is used properly, it may be elevating to a degree of which you have no conception. This portrait of yourself, as pictured by your motives, is the only true one. Do not be afraid of it. It is you. Frame it or give it a place in your album. Lose not sight of it. It will serve as reference—it will serve as a term of comparison when, after daily and splendid effort to improve your spiritual features, you set down once more in the unflattering light of your motives to impress upon your minds a picture of yourself transformed and beautified. In your exploration of your real character as unfolded by your motives you may have noticed everywhere one dominant purpose. It was the gratification of self. It was the aggrandizement of self to the exclusion of every one else. You probably found your whole being prostrate before that great idol self. You discovered that the whole circumference of your being, all the radii, the very centre of your activity, proclaimed one thing, and that that one thing was self. You had acted, you had thought for self only. You made so much of self that outside of you there was nothing else, and the whole world seemed made for you and for you only. That the world was a bright world when it served you, that it was cruel and worse when in any way it thwarted your designs. You measured everything by yourself. You never

thought of how you were contracting the dimension of things by using this measure.

The great big world is small at best, but it becomes almost imperceptible when we make ourselves its ratio of magnitude. You really, so the survey tells you, cared for no one except inasmuch as they became purveyors for you. Self was at the bottom of all your affections. The altruism which can be sounded by self is very, very shallow, indeed. You saw no use in the world save as it and the people thereof were of benefit to you. This self-examination cuts, and cuts keenly and deeply; but it is omnipotent in its curative power. It is a surgical operation which, if you desire it so, always succeeds. It helps vision and vigor. Without it there are dangerous growths fostered in your spiritual nature; growths which, if unchecked, will result in disease and death.

Suppose you apply the remedy just now; suppose you start just now on a voyage for the discovering of your better or your worse self. The motives which drive all the wheels of human action are beyond number if looked at in detail. They are as many as there are individuals. They may be classified, however. Their huge bulk is reducible to a minimum. In fact, there is one label which covers them all. That label is self—a word every letter of which should be written in capitals. However, there is an error against which everybody must be on his guard. We are self-centred by the very nature of things. Try as we may, we can not lose sight of self. There are interests of self which it would be criminal not to seek and guard. There are goods which we must love and procure for ourselves independently of everybody and everything else, and such would be virtue and its consequent reward, salvation. Strange to say, it is chiefly by going out of ourselves, by sacrificing ourselves for others, that we assure ourselves of these benefits. We may allow

the whole world to revolve about us provided we rotate around God. Then everything is in equilibrium and the highest order is established. Self, which interprets all other motives, which is the simplest expression of all sinister motives—self may be broken up into its constituent elements. In seeking self what are you longing for—whose solicitation are you following? The great seducers of man are the world, the devil, and the flesh. Toward these decoys, unfortunately, all men have a leaning. There is a depravity in our nature, an original concupiscence which is the fountain from which all these sinful lusts flow, the furnace from which, as so many sparks, all wrong inclinations arise. Since the beginning these three deceivers have led astray all who have gone astray. If there be anything not perfect, anything selfish, anything degrading in our ends and aims, it is because we have joined in the frenzied race which is inspired by one or other or all of these three agencies, which so fatally debauch all that is high in man or woman. The loud, blatant world is the leader in the march to death, in that funeral procession which every second is burying so many lofty hopes and ringing the knell of so many lives that otherwise would have been robust and beautiful beyond compare. The whole globe is resonant with the tread of feet eagerly pressing in pursuit of what the world has to offer. Among its gifts are wealth and pleasure and fame. It promises to crown all its votaries with these diadems, but first and last and always these laurels must be flung at its feet and worn in its honor.

Which one of these motives is your guiding star? Begin the process of self-inspection! Look first at the life which has been given you. What are you doing with that gift which is so incalculably precious? In other words, what is the motive of your very life? What are you living for? What power is exhausting all your

activity? What is inextricably woven with all your thoughts, all your aspirations? Whose is the sceptre which compels your words, your deeds, your very breathing? What is always on the horizon which circumscribes your sphere of action and limits your vision? What do you waken for? What do you fatigue yourself for? What is your first impulse on arising, your last project on retiring?

Yes, ask yourself again, what do you live for? Is your existence one round of endeavors to rid yourself of your surroundings, to alter the circumstances by which you are hemmed in? Does your mind never exalt itself above the plane of your daily wants, your daily hunger and your daily thirst? Is the goal toward which you are panting in irritation and discontent only on a level with this globe, which is after all but the footstool of God? Do your eyes never rise from the footstool to the throne and gaze upon the Creator who made you for such a boundless inheritance and placed the eternities as a legacy within your reach? Have you sold, are you always selling your birthright for a mess of pottage? What is at the bottom of your unrest? Is it the divine home sickness which makes everything here below gall upon the palate and fills you with yearnings for the country where the Master has built you every one a mansion? Or have you settled down to the woful conviction that this is an abiding place? Are you satisfied to drink at the fountain of the shining but unslaking waters of time? Have you allowed your whole personality, all that you are, to burrow into the shifting sands of these sublunary spaces and lie down and be at rest therein? Is wealth the bubble whose iridescent dancing on the tossing waters of this perishable existence is luring you on? Or is it the glitter of fame which holds your eyes in its fatal spell? Or is it the world with all these charms that weaves its enchantment

about you, and hides with its glamour the better things of the better world from your eyes?

Weigh well these motives which control, and, while controlling, vitiate all that is worth having in life and bring neither peace nor happiness nor contentment. So much for your life in general and the forces which shape it. If that large thing, your life, is impelled by no lofty purpose, what about the details which go to make it up? What about the minor businesses of existence? What about your allotted task, your work, your affections, your friendships? Yes, that is a question of moment. Why do you work? Why do you get up at the same hour every morning, go to bed at the same hour every night, leave the house so regularly, walk the same streets, ride the same cars, take up the same needle, handle the same stuff, finger the same pen, fill the same pages, write down the same figures, stand behind the same counter, bepraise the same goods, listen to the same commands, look into the same faces, confront the same customers, deal gently with the same children, read to them, feed them, care for them, put up with their ill natures, light the same fire, cook and serve the same meals, clean and tidy the same rooms, finger the same typewriter, and pedal the same machine? Why do you do all this, why do you submit to all this wearying and sometimes killing monotony? Because you have to? Poor motive, this. Because it brings you in a pittance? Hardly a better motive, this. Because otherwise the wolf would break down the door? Is it only for this? Because you have a mother or a father, or a crippled sister or invalid brother to support? Ah, this is somewhat higher. Or do you accept it all and accept it with resignation, and accept it with contentment, with cheerfulness, perhaps, or with gladness, and do it all splendidly because such is your lot in life and because He, without whose knowledge not even a sparrow falls to the

ground, has so ordained it? Then I say all is well and you are really living and your life is worth much, and your name is written on the list of heroines, on that roll which is unfurled before the eyes of the Master and His angels only. How much more meritorious this than to labor drudgely and because you can not help it, your eyes filled with hot, bitter unshed tears, and your heart envy-laden and brimming with jealousy, carrying your burden like a whipped slave and at war with every one on earth and in heaven! How much better this than the railing at all humanity and at the established order of things! The misery that flows from the lower, the meaner, the selfish motives! The terrible designs that it generates in the mind of the toiler! The skulking life that it entails! The ungenerous thoughts with which it crams shallow pates! The false shame that it begets! The unfilial desires that it wrings from sordid souls! The criminal wishes that it engenders! The useless regrets that it awakens! The impossible wishes it inspires!

How many young women blush so needlessly for their condition, blush so shamefully for their homes, their parents, their friends, for everything? Let them try the magic of a lofty motive, and lo, what a transformation! The meanest home becomes a palace, the commonest clothes become royal raiment, an ignorant mother or an unrefined father becomes as the finest lady or gentleman in the land, and the meanest work is lifted into an occupation fit for the leisure and the hands of a princess. You have tasted the real significance of your life, your work, your home, your family. Perhaps the result has startled you. So much the better. There is transfiguration in all this. Let its light shine in upon you. Let its thaumaturgy bewitch you and exorcise the demon of heart-burning and grief. Use now the same experiment and essay the nature of your friendships. How much unalloyed gold do you find therein? Why

have you chosen this friend? Why have you rejected that other? Whose benefit are you seeking among those you have taken to your heart? Is it others? Is it yours? Why is association with them so pleasing to you? What do you find in them? Do they assuage your thirst for praise, for commendation, for flattery? Are they true friends? Will they check you when unrighteous, and approve with all their might when your passions are violently and aggressively and triumphantly antagonized by your own endeavor to kill self wherever it shows itself?

You will notice that this chapter is made up of questions chiefly. But they are pertinent, they are searching. They all aim at one purpose. That purpose is to enable you to study yourselves, to know yourselves, to understand yourselves. This self-knowledge is an antidote against all that is venomous in existence. Joined with the fear of the Lord, thence will arise the Valiant Woman, fearless and ready for any fate.

VII.—HAPPINESS.

What a luminous word happiness is! How stirring and how searching! It has, whenever uttered, a response away down in the lowest depths of our being. Everybody understands its meaning. One's entire nature rises in answer to the appeal that it always and everywhere makes to the individual. It has a synonym in all tongues. It is full of suggestion. It has hung starlike over the human race since the beginning. It has been set to music the whole world over. It has in one way or other set the whole world to music. Its tones have rung out like the notes of a clarion at the borders of every parasang which the universe has traveled in the march of progress. It is an inspiration. It is resonant with all the melodies of life. It is a perfume which always regales. It is a bloom which always beautifies. It is voluminous in its many-sided significance. It awakens all the instincts. It presents so many images. It has throbbed in all the poetry of bygone ages. It is a poem in itself. It is an *Iliad*, an *Aeneid*. It is a *Paradise Regained*, *aye*, and a *Paradise Lost*. It pulses in all the writings of the Jewish, pagan and Christian past. It has been the watchword which nerved the nations as each new century dawned. It cradled and it buried all the eras as it cradles and buries all individuals. Every life is lived under its impulse. It is the heartbeat of all living. It compels motion and activity always. It stands on the threshold of every home as its bright face shines in upon the beginning of every life. After God, it is the expression which is most frequent on human lips. It is an atmosphere sun-pierced and germ-laden and freshened by ozone which springs up in the parterres of eternity,

redolent of "flowers of every hue and without thorn—the rose, stealing and giving odors." It is all this and more. Epithets but totter and lose their meaning as we apply them, and phrases are phrases only, full of failure and signifying nothing. It is the visitant which is never not welcome. It is the guest we would always harbor in our homes. Yet we have never looked on the fair face of this radiant presence. As she walks among the abodes of men her wings veil the unspeakable beauty of her countenance. Her wings—aye, there is the pity of it. She is timid and always aflutter, and a thought or a desire or a word or a deed ungente, and she expands her pinions and flies away.

The verbiage that I have just made is a proof of the fascination which the term happiness exercises upon mankind. I am afraid that I have jumbled the term with the idea. What the poet says of honor is true of happiness:

"Honor and praise from no condition rise,
Act well thy part; there all the honor lies."

Ah, the beauty of it; to think that God has so loved us that He has left our happiness in the fashioning of our hands.

My dear young women, do you remember, in all your busiest career, looking out for anything save happiness? Have you ever wished for anything but happiness? You behind your counter, you behind your cash box, you who rise in winter time before the sun gilds the horizon, you who stand day in and day out, who answer the half understood questions of your customers, you who wake every morning to the needs of your master and your mistress, you who away up in the outskirts of our big city rush to your train, for the telegraph office or the teacher's desk, you, also, raised in and surrounded by luxury, what are you, all poor atoms of humanity

and sweetest pets of the Almighty, what are you all pushing for, from the moment that at daybreak you struggle through the dense crowds of this thronged city? One force alone is dragging you on: the insatiable desire for happiness. What is happiness? Need we define it?

It is the satisfaction of all your longing. It is the gratification of all your wishes. You know what it is without my describing it. When are you perfectly happy? Only when your longings are satisfied! Have you been ever flawlessly happy? Have all your longings ever been satisfied? Just as I talk to you, is there any ungratified desire? Now as I look at you, is there anything you wish? I know that your poor little hearts are throbbing because there are desires that as yet are clamoring for fulfilment. No; ye have never had all your longings appeased, nor will they ever be this side of eternity.

But a truce to all these considerations. First ascertain for yourselves what happiness is. There are some things very hard to define, some things toward the understanding of which much study, in fact a whole education, is required. It is not so with the essentials of existence. You may not be able to put in words what God is, or what immortality is, or eternity, but nevertheless you have an idea of the Divinity; you have an idea of the perpetual duration of the spirit, of periods unending. It is clear to your minds that there is one being above all other beings in the universe and that you call Him God. You are in no doubt that immortality is deathlessness and that your faith teaches that your soul will never die. It is also patent to you that an incessant flow of years, that an intermittent flow of epochs, is eternity. Now your notion of happiness is just as simple and true as are these other notions. Happiness, you are aware, is a condition of being in which, in the first

place, there is the possession of some object desired, in which there is the attainment of all you incline toward; the possession whereof is secure, which nobody will take from you, which is yours to have and to hold forever. If you have it not, you are unhappy. If there is the thought that some day or other some one will wrest it from you, you are in torture.

The question which you have asked yourselves many and many a time is: Is it within the reach of any one to be perfectly happy? The answer is unhesitating—and there is happiness in the answer—the answer is that this blessed condition may be reached not only by some, but by all. Every one, therefore, can be happy. What consolation in this knowledge! Shout it out over all the confines of earth, and how many would accept it as truth? On the contrary, how many would receive it with jeers and inextinguishable laughter? How wretched were the peoples before the coming of Christ! How miserable that scanty portion of humanity which thronged around Him at the foot and on the slope of the mountain on which He sat as He delivered that memorable discourse, the echoes of which will still make this world musical, and which will last until the ultimate syllable of recorded time! A sonorous word fell from His divine lips—Blessed; that is, happy! Every ear became attentive. Happy! Happiness! These were terms which had ceased to have a meaning. They were mere ghosts of a past which was irrecoverable. In some golden ages, lost in the mists of time, they signified something, but in this day of imperial Rome, with its universal sway, they were mere conventional expressions, splendid bubbles on the tides of speech; splendid bubbles and nothing more. Was this new prophet to restore them to their birthright among the languages of the world? There must have been in the loving tones of His voice vibrations of conviction which,

while they thrilled, compelled assent. At last! At long last! There was an opening of doors, and through the gates ajar came the brightness of a light which had seemed fated to be forever dimmed. Yet there were the glad tidings—the tinkling of cymbals, and the blare of trumpets, and the whispering of viols floated hither and thither, and the whole world of sounds, sweet, and like the fluttering of angel-wings, was opened up, and eyes were trembling with a glow hitherto undreamed, and cheeks were touched with the rose-hue which hope alone can paint.

Happiness was somewhere, and somewhere for them, and if for them, somewhere for their children and their brethren, whose numbers stretched from east to west, whose moanings were heard from Caucasus to Ultima Thule and beyond; whose sighings were like the breathings of illimitable forests in whose primeval depths no star nor sun penetrated and in the heart of which was boundless and unspeakable despair.

“Blessed are the poor”—ah, uncertainty smites the strings again and awakens doleful echoes. Is happiness for the poor and the poor only? What of the rich! What of the mighty ones! What of the palace! Are the banners so radiant to grace only the hovel, and was the black flag of utter wretchedness still to flap its forbidding folds over the abodes of the Tetrarch and the Cesar! One moment. Christ came for all. “Blessed are the poor in spirit.” Three words, and the circuit is complete. He has summoned to the earth the long expected presence which will, in its march around the universe, smile into every face uplifted to greet it, and bless every home opened to receive it, and crown every life prepared for its advent.

In fact, the eight beatitudes are not merely finger-posts pointing to the goal where happiness resides and where happiness is pur-

chasable. They are singly each the road leading to the enchanted castle. They are not the sum total of felicity, but each one individually is the prescription which infallibly generates the ideal condition of being toward which everybody, whether he will it or not, either is progressing or fancies he is progressing. For if there is one thing truer than another, it is that we are all urged irresistibly on by a desire for happiness. The fatal mistake lies in being misled, in taking the wrong road. There is no impulse so strong, there is no agency so impetuous as the longing for happiness. The query easily comes to the lips: why then if that hunger be so fierce, be such a dynamic force, so impelling, so uncontrollable; why then, is it so frequently, so generally terminated in failure? Why is that large conflagration which burns in every heart and lights up every life, why is it extinguished seething and hissing in the dark waters of despondency and disappointment?

The answer to that why is, that happiness is lodged in one entrenchment only, and nowhere else. It is the terminal of one road and of no other. It is throned on one throne and upon no other. It has one abode and no other. The reason of all the mistakes in this matter is misdirection. Men are not on the road. They are striving hither and thither, they are as active as beagles in the pursuit, but they have lost the scent. They will never thus run down their quarry. At any rate, out of all this hurly-burly rises the conviction that men are possessed by one idea and are inextricably in its grasp—the idea of obtaining happiness. This idea, or better, this desire, springs from some hidden source in our nature, and out of that source it wells until it surrounds and submerges our entire energy so that the whole being is swayed by it. Such a phenomenon can be accounted for only by the further certainty that it is ultimately to be attributed to the Maker of our being, who is God,

The Master has stamped our nature with this longing. In fashioning our souls, He creates, absolutely creates, each one of them. Is it the touch of that father-hand which we are unable to unremember that begets in us a longing for the heights and for the infinite?

This much we are sure of: God is the cause of that unappeasable hunger and thirst which drive men to the furthestmost bounds of space, which sustain them amidst appalling hardships, which nerve them to face disease and death, to accomplish the one unbidden yearning for beatitude. Yes; it is a God-given desire. It moved the angels in that terrible fight that took place between Michael and the dragon. The war-cry of the rebellious principalities, "We will be like unto God," properly penetrated and instinct with humility, would have been a cry of victory instead of defeat. They misunderstood. Theirs was a case of misdirection. They were made to be like unto God; only it was God, and not they themselves, who was to elevate them to that similitude.

The prevarication of our first parents arose from a similar error. "Ye will be like unto gods." *There* was the bribe.

But it is also God's bribe wherewith to allure us to Himself. He made us to be like unto Himself. What measureless content is held within the promise that one day we will be like unto God! No happiness comparable to that. God is the father of that unsleeping hankering for perfect bliss. Whence we derive the consoling inference, whereby we establish the incontrovertible truth, the twofold truth, that perfect happiness is somewhere and is within the reach of every one coming into the world. Could we reconcile any other statement in this connection with God's perfect nature? What a tyrant the Almighty would be were He to enkindle that fire within the human bosom only to deliver man over to its excruciating torture! Such a fire blazing

and burning and consuming the heart would have no counterpart save in those pools where the eternally doomed lie in their utter despair.

My young friends, keep alive within you, carry with you wherever you go, bring with you wherever you are, above all bear aloft in the dark places of your experience, in your tribulations, in your vexations, in your failures, in your success, in poverty, in comfort, in sickness, in health, in despondency, in wondering, in uncertainty, in bewilderment, when you are forsaken, when you are bereaved, when loved ones go, when friends betray, when the smile of the world is a sneer for you and scorn for your condition, bear aloft the torch of this auroral truth, that God made you, that He knows who you are, what you are, where you are, how you are, that He and not another made you, that He made you not in hatred—you are so often tempted to think this but love, that no matter what path your steps may be treading, He is leading you to a happiness which you have no standard here below to gauge, to a haven where all storms are stilled.

I have only, in all these lines, endeavored to lisp one thing, and that is you were made for happiness. I have not stated what that happiness is. I cannot. Who can? St. Paul, who was rapt to the third heaven and beheld the glory thereof, is speechless as he remembers the golden moments. He finds words only to say, "That eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him" (I. Cor. ii. 9). This talk has been a *quasi* rhapsody on the happiness that is to come, it has been about the heaven of the beatific vision. Some things remain to be said about felicity in this world—for there is a heaven here as well as there.

VIII.—HAPPINESS.

All happenings in all times are explained by the sleepless desire for happiness which controls imperiously the impulses of every human breast. No man, since the first man, has ever in his wildest acts been prompted by any other longing. All hankerings, all projects, all purposes, all aims, spring from it and are traceable to it. You can all make, out of your own experience, the analysis, and you will find that wherever you have been driven by your inclinations the direction was regulated by that overmastering aspiration. Every eye, from birth to demise, is turned longingly toward this Eden, this Paradise, wherein lies embowered the splendid presence, one smile of which makes amends for the slowy passing years of weary waiting. This universal trend of all will force is the explanation of every event which has occurred in the lives of individuals, families, and nations. It has been the parent of crimes the most enormous and of virtues the most heroic. It can destroy as well as save. It can mar or make careers. So in a series of talks such as these it is only claiming its right when it asks for a place in the forefront.

Young women who are called by the conditions of existence in general, and are summoned in particular by their lot in life, to labor for the very bread of which others have so much that the crumbs thereof would feed battalions, are tempted to believe that those more favored by fortune are alone the possessors of that rare beatitude which every heart is hungering for. This view of life is erroneous beyond a doubt, but is nevertheless very common. Where it prevails it must frankly be confessed that happiness is out of the question. Where it is entertained it plays havoc with the finer feelings of

the soul, and fills the breast with emotions that are neither Christian nor rational. The sooner it is expelled from the mind, the sooner will the door open, through which peace and contentment enter. There is nothing so blighting or so baneful as its influence. It has wrecked many lives. It has made, for multitudes, it has made out of life a tissue of deplorable blunders. It has given to things worthless and pernicious impossible values. It has distorted the judgments and corrupted the hearts of millions. It is the breeder of inconceivable woes. It has made hideous the features of a world which the Maker designed in love, and intended to be a stage whereon men and women were to enact beautiful deeds and bewitch all beholders with marvels of superhuman virtues; a stage whereon, as the curtain fell, the plaudits of angels in heaven would be echoes of the "bravos" and "bravas" of entranced spectators on earth.

And it is all so inexcusable. There is for every one a way out of the wreckage. The prophet royal asked the Lord for a little intelligence, and with that vouchsafed him he was sure he could live; that is, possess here below life in its fullest significance. "Grant me, O Lord, intelligence, and I will live." Hasty conclusions are generally noxious. Bring your own common sense to bear upon your condition. When you contrast your situation with that of others be sure of your data. Compare facts with facts; not fancies with realities. There is one thing which must not be forgotten. There *is* happiness here below, and there *is* happiness within every one's reach. You are in a class where work begins early and ends late. You are in a class where you are under the commands of another. You enjoy but little freedom. Day in and day out, it is the same story. It is "stitch, stitch, stitch," till your fingers are worn. The fatigue of limb rises like a tide until it

reaches the heart. There is no weariness like heart weariness. Out of the tide like a ghost the spectre of discouragement appears, and walks with you, and sits with you, and rides with you. It follows you everywhere. It dogs you always. It haunts you. Its monotonous moan deadens all other sounds and renders all the daughters of music and song silent. Everything grows dark and the prospect is drearier still. I would that I could paint the picture in its most repulsive colors. I would like to put things at their worst. I would like to voice, in most pathetic tones, the refrain, or rather threnody, of complaining, which so many women of the manual class are so constantly crooning to themselves and others.

My reason for such a power is that I am sure there is a remedy on this globe, here this side of the grave, for the afflicted heart, no matter how laden down with miseries it may be. If God has made a pact with temptation, so that no one is ever tempted beyond her strength, surely He has never bowed down any human back with a burden it can not bear. So runneth Scripture, and so do the saints, hidden and revealed, proclaim. "For He that brought evils upon you, shall bring you everlasting joy again, with your salvation." "Thus saith the Lord: Let thy voice cease from weeping, and thy eyes from tears: for there is a reward for thy work" (Jer. xxxi. 16). "He never withdraweth his mercy from us: but though he chastise his people with adversity, he forsaketh them not" (II. Mach. vi. 16). "Behold I have taken out of thy hand the cup of dead sleep, the dregs of the cup of my indignation, thou shalt not drink it again any more" (Is. li. 22).

So we discover that there is never unmixed tribulation, no more than there ever is unalloyed joy. No matter how troubles press upon you, there will always be alleviation close by. Sometimes it is the alleviation which comes from surcease of sorrow, but always

it may be the divine comfort which patience brings. The Christian is always prompted by her faith to say: "This sickness is not unto death" (John xi. 4). So your Church teaches. So your ancestors in the faith, the saints, believed and lived. When one remembers that this valley in which we are dwellers is a vale of tears, one naturally looks rather for tribulation than for joy. Suffering is the common lot. Only the few, the very few, if any, escape this universal law, and it would be hard to say whether they are justified in calling themselves privileged. That the saints comprehended this doctrine and gladly welcomed every visitation of Providence is attested in every age of the Church. They claimed no exemption. Rather, they courted suffering. This was their constant disposition, no matter what their rank. Consider the queens whose earthly crown was dimmed by the brightness of the diadem of their holiness. In some way or other the Spirit of God, attracted by the loveliness of their souls, filled them with a desire to be unknown, to be considered as nothing, so that in their prayers they petitioned to follow in the footsteps of the agonizing Christ. They were more at home with Him, abandoned and bleeding on the cross, than with Him glorified on Thabor. They begged for thorns and scourges and the mantle of scoffing and scorn; rather than for jewels or fine linen or royal purple. They gloried in Christ crucified. They learned the lesson that "the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come that shall be revealed in us." "That which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation, worketh for us, above measure exceedingly, an eternal weight of glory" (Rom. viii. 18; Q. C. iv. 17). In the thirteenth century I behold princesses and abbesses and the Queen of Hungary on the roll of the saints, and thereon, too, as illustrious as any, the poor servant maid, St. Zita. St. Zita, the daughter of a poor mother, whose only anxiety was

that she should give back her child to God as she had received her from the baptismal font, learned early the lesson of hardship and suffering. She cultivated modesty and humility and patience. She charmed all who saw her. At twelve years of age she was put to service. Her one comfort was that the house of her mistress was close by the Church of St. Frigidian. She was thoroughly persuaded (I quote Alban Butler) that labor is enjoined upon all men as a punishment of sin, and as a remedy for the spiritual disorders of their souls. Far from harboring in her breast the least uneasiness or expressing any sort of complaint under contradictions, poverty and hardships, and still more from entertaining the least idle, inordinate or worldly desire, she blessed God for placing her on that station in which she was supplied with the most effectual means to promote her sanctification by the necessity of employing herself in penitential labor and of living in a perpetual conformity and submission of her will to others.

Needless to say that her life was not an easy one. Needless to say that she grew in sanctity before God and men. Of a necessity her life must have won many souls to God. Who would not imagine that such a person would have been esteemed and beloved by all who knew her? It fell out quite otherwise. For several years her trials were of the harshest. Her modesty was called stupidity and want of spirit and want of sense, and her diligence was judged to have no other spring than affectation and secret pride. Her mistress was extremely prepossessed against her. Perhaps we may conceive how much Zita had to suffer in this situation. Her days were days of incessant persecution. Her nights she spent in laying all her miseries at the feet of the Crucifix and begging the Master not to spare, but to send her more and severer trials. So, unjustly despised, overburdened, reviled and often beaten, she never repined nor lost

her patience, but always preserved the same sweetness in her countenance and the same meekness and charity in her heart and words, and abated nothing of her application to her duties. A virtue so constant and so admirable at length overcame jealousy, antipathy, prejudice and malice. Her master and her mistress discovered the treasure which their family possessed in the fidelity and example of the humble saint, and the other servants gave due praise to her virtue. She died at the age of sixty, and numberless miracles juridically proved attested her power with God.

I have lingered over the main features of this beautiful life because they serve to prove what I advanced concerning happiness in trials. Her days were days of fatigue and her position was an inferior one. She confirms this saving truth that all work is holy. No work defiles. Work is what our motives make it. You may engage in it half-heartedly and resentfully. You thereby lower yourselves; you veritably render yourselves slaves. She was as human as any of you. She had eyes and ears and senses and nerves, as you have, Though poor she was a spirited girl. She lifted up her work. She made a crown of it for herself, and a right royal coronet it became. She had your aspirations. The temptation to look beyond the daily routine of her life, the temptation to covet an existence of freedom, ease and indolence and pleasure, was just as strong in her as in you. Had she seen any legitimate way of bettering herself, she would have taken it as was her right and her duty. She desired happiness eagerly. She did not look for it on heights which she knew she would never be competent to climb. She accepted her environment and, within its restricted limits, she made for herself a kingdom—a kingdom of which no one could dispossess her. She dedicated herself to the task before her. She brought to its fulfilment the highest motives. She did the work for men and women,

but she did it for God; did it because God had appointed it for her to do; did it because she was assured God knew best and allotted to her duties which were more conducive to her peace of mind and contentment than any she might select herself. She knew she was doing His will, and therefore the work she performed under that dictation was noblest.

The life of the saint who has rightly been chosen as the patroness of the young women whose avocation binds them to an employment which keeps them constantly under the eye of a master or mistress has a charm all its own. Its suggestiveness is almost boundless. I am not unconscious that her office is one that at the present time meets with little indulgence. It seems that it does not appeal with much eloquence to the young woman who is obliged to earn her bread in the sweat of her brow or the nimbleness of her fingers or in the rapidity of her pen, or her competency in figures or her manipulation of scissors or needle. I mean that there are very few girls who would willingly put themselves out to domestic service. The general impression seems to be against the duties of the servant girl. The servant girl—the living-out girl—seems to occupy not a very high rank among the toilers. There is a prejudice against the position. This opposition is certainly very common. Young women, as a rule, do not care to do such work. They consider it as beneath them. In fact, the servant girl has become a topic for every-day discussion. She is a subject for caricature and sarcasm and satire. Yet the occupation is a necessity. The work must be performed, and therefore some shoulders must bear the burden. Servants there must be; family servants, I mean. I would hardly presume to think I could go with anything like accuracy to the root of the matter. Who may say who is to blame? The situation is an awkward one. A remedy is imperatively de-

manded. If it is not forthcoming there is no knowing how disastrous may be the results. It has already disturbed the equilibrium of the home. It has gone very far toward breaking up the family. It has imperiled the hearth to the advantage of the hotel.

The evils of this new dispensation are incalculable. In the mind of the Church the family is made up of the master and mistress and children and servants. These last were an integral portion of the home. They were always subordinates, but they were always in intimate connection with superiors and children. They were trusted. In many instances they were the mainstay of the family. In their own way they possessed a certain amount of authority. Their interests were always guarded. Year by year they grew closer and dearer, and time and time again the services they rendered were far from being menial. They were not seldom admitted to the household councils. Their words were considered words of wisdom. They were often fathers and mothers to the children, and frequently the advisers of the parents. They lived and died in service, and the affection and regard of their employers followed them to the grave. In many a God's acre may be seen monuments erected to the fidelity of those who for so many years had devoted their best energies to the welfare of their employers. It is really deplorable that young women in service do not always remain loyal to the families employing them, loyal in deed and word; do not, in fact, keep the compact they agree to when they enter this or that other household. Perhaps they are not in the enjoyment of the freedom which the girl in the shop, the factory, behind the counter or before the typewriter, has. Perhaps they have not so many hours they may call their own. But compute the advantages. They have a home, good bed and good board. Their expenses are not so many. On the whole their wages—please do not ask me to say their salaries—

their wages are more remunerative. They enjoy protection always. They gradually identify themselves and legitimately with the dignity of their families.

Think of St. Zita from the age of twelve to that of sixty—forty-eight years in service, but forty-eight years—nearly half a century of consecrated and glorified labor—nearly half a century in the possession of God's peace, with copious quaffing from the cup of happiness, which the Master fills for and puts to the lips of His faithful servants. Be not afraid of tribulation. It is ever to be kept in mind that our ways are not God's ways: "For whom the Lord loveth, he chastiseth: and he scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. Persevere under discipline. God dealeth with you as with his sons: for what son is there whom the Lord doth not correct? But if you be without chastisement, whereof all are made partakers, then are you bastards, and not sons" (Heb. xii. 6-8).

IX.—HAPPINESS.

I am loath to cut short the discussion of this topic. Much depends on it. Many points of interest are, moreover, suggested while considering it. The prevailing danger constantly besetting young women whose existence is largely made up of work is *discontent*. What discontent does for them is not hard to imagine. It makes them restless. It disturbs the equanimity which is absolutely necessary for the proper performance of duty. It incapacitates them for the full enjoyment of whatever pleasure their circumstances may furnish. It disqualifies them from rendering justice to themselves and their merits. They, whenever overcome by this mood, are always at their worst. It prevents their true worth from becoming discernible. They are passed by when others are chosen. Opportunities are lost. All brightness of character is dimmed. There is no such thing as an even tenor of existence. They commit a thousand blunders in their impetuosity. They are blinded to the realities of life. Living becomes a dream or a nightmare. Their work is open to censure. They are constantly dropping stitches which they never can gather again save by ripping up all they have done and beginning over once more. They lose valuable time. They are an impediment to themselves and are very much in the way of others. They breathe useless sighs and shed fruitless tears. They throw wide open the doors of their souls for every temptation to enter. They forget to look up. They trudge or rather they limp through their days. God help them when old age comes—these young women who nurse their discontent!

God help them, for they have made few friends! They have

always been marjoys. Neither men nor women delight them, nor do they attract men or women. Of all poor creatures they are to be pitied. Some may say they are undeserving of anything like commiseration, that they have brought all their affliction upon themselves, that had they acted differently they would not find themselves in this plight. Perhaps so. They may deserve no pity, but from my heart I pity them.

The question arises, Is not this discontent, which is the parent of murmurings and heartburns, a feeling natural to all who are perpetually struggling for, not the comforts but the bare necessities of life? Undoubtedly the incessant fight for better surroundings or for more pleasurable living will beget a weariness of mind and limbs. It will make the outlook very dreary at times and will summon not the best part of our character to the surface. Yet there is a way to prevent these transient emotions from congealing into a settled condition. They need not form the atmosphere in which one is to move and have one's being. They may be always held in check, as we ward off temptations. It is not at all necessary that they possess us entirely, or in part, to the degree that they become the notes of a funeral march accompanying us in all our thoughts, words and actions. It is not at all imperative that the music of our life be degraded into a dirge. Such is not God's wish in allowing us to be assailed by these disturbing impressions.

As I have already said, these influences are only temptations, and the distance between temptation and sin is very long indeed. It is in our power to pierce through these cloud-compelling vexations till our thoughts reach the blue, to rise above them high enough to get a glimpse of the silver lining. No human violence need so control us as to prevent our making a sunshine all our own. There is healing somewhere for whatever wounds may have been inflicted.

The balm in Gilead is not all exhausted. One method which suggests itself, and which not seldom has proven a panacea, is an indignant repudiation of any thought which may bear along with it a stimulus to pusillanimity. The faint heart never won anything.

There is an optimism which is uplifting. Things might be much worse than they are. Things are much better than they appear. Besides, the possibilities of the future are infinite and impenetrable. No one knows what the next turn in the road may reveal.

I am putting in the foreground for the moment only arguments which have but a natural basis. These may prevail for the nonce, but they are not always convincing, or, rather, they are not always persuasive. They may help for a little distance, but they weaken as the journey widens out and lengthens. Still they are of some avail. No matter how black the way before you may seem, you may be unable to predict a glimmering of light. It may be that you will have to push on through gloom until the end. Such things happen. Aye, it may be part of your earthly destiny that the darkness will thicken and everything grow drearier until the reaching of the term. Yet, even with such a cheerless prospect before you, I say, Cheer up! Have courage! Summon to your assistance some deliberation and a little reason. Worry is wearying and wearing. Brooding changeth nothing.

Ask yourselves what it is that you would have changed. You are not happy? That might be questioned. Perhaps if you looked into the reality of things, perhaps if you understood exactly the situation, you might in all honesty feel compelled to retract your assertion. This retraction would be more positive if you compared your condition with that of those whom perhaps you envy. The first great fact which you must always confront, not only you, but every woman as well as you, is, that perfect happiness is not

found anywhere between the poles or under the sky or beneath the stars. All, before they discover that consummate bliss which all are longing for, which their hearts cry out for with a cry that has never been and never will be smothered, must pass through the gates of death. It can be discovered only on the thither verge of the grave. To know, to be sure of this fact which is attested by the experience of centuries, that is by the experience of all times and of all persons and personages, is one of the beginnings of wisdom. It changes the outlook. It strips life of some of its tawdry charm. It fills hearts with a salutary aching for the better land. It casts a saving pall over the dancing will-o'-the-wisp figures in this passing show. When you bring home to yourselves this patent conviction, then you have made your first step in the direction of rest and peace and contentment, which are the only emissaries that happiness sends to enliven and encourage poor mortals here below.

A further examination of this verity will be profitable. It is the human heart which is full of yearnings. It is so small, this human heart, yet how vast it is! "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world?" I ask this question incompletely; I ask it, eliminating from it that formidable "If" with which the Master completed it. No man in his wildest moments has ever desired possession of the whole world. Every one knows the utter impossibility of such an ownership. Yet let us fancy a man, or rather let us fancy a woman, in control of the universe. I mean in fullest control. She rules it with an empire that is entire and boundless. Hers are all its wealth, treasures, precious things. Hers are all its elements. One stamp of her foot and the hidden storehouses of the earth yawn and pour out at her feet in dazzling profusion every gem and jewel and diamond and rarest stones and gold and silver and all the mineral riches with which the dark recesses beneath the crust are teeming.

They are hers to deck herself with. They are hers to convert into ingots and coins. They are hers to purchase luxuries and pleasures beyond the dreams of women. She stands on the shingle of the ocean, and thunder and lightning and winds are hers to harness or to let loose. She is the queen of the storm and of the calm. She may command that wave that is billowing toward central ocean to watch all the hidden depths, and to return to her with crest and scoop and trough laden with pearls, to drop them like foam on the sands on which her throne is set. She is mistress of the seasons. At her beck will come the icy breath of winter. In midsummer the cooling zephyrs of the spring will come at her call. At one wave of her wand autumn is by her side clothed in all her royalty of rich vintage and rare fruitage. Under the midnight skies she stands and marshals the constellations and the stars as she pleases.

There never was such plenary possession as I attribute, for the sake of my pleading, to this woman. I am endeavoring to picture her laden with everything that the world can give. She is graced with beauty and dowered with youth and health. She holds captive the willing hearts and minds of all men and all women. There is no wish that is not gratified. Even the span of life is lengthened out to her beyond the measure granted to the earlier sires of the race.

My palette is empty. I have used up all my colors. I ask now whether that impossible queen is perfectly happy? Enviably she undoubtedly is. Take her as she IS, fashioned from the stuff of which dreams are made; approach her and ask her is she perfectly happy. You desire an honest answer. Watch her features as she is struggling to make the reply. There is a contraction of brow; there are lines, almost imperceptibly tracing themselves, on the smooth

skin and crowding round the smiling lips. There is a catch to her breath, and there is the faintest echo of a sigh as she responds, out of the knowledge of her own heart and out of the conviction of her own mind, that not to-day is she, nor on any yesterday of the past was she, perfectly happy. Never had she for one single hour worn the full rose of consummate felicity. The why and wherefore of all this is not far to seek. The real cause of her lacking what our nature craves for lies in the absolute impotency of the world, with all that it has, with all that it can do, to bring about such a consummation as flawless beatitude. This is a goal which all the potency of the universe can not reach out to. The sooner we are penetrated with this truth, the sooner we will give up the useless chasing of the rainbow, the fruitless letting down of buckets into wells and bringing nothing up. The world can do no more than its limitations can effect, and because of its limitations the world, boasting and ambitious as it is, is in this particular helpless and bankrupt. In other words, the earth is itself and is not heaven. The home of happiness, as of misery, is the human heart. From the heart springs every desire, and desolate indeed is it, until every wish is appeased. The heart hunger is real starvation, the starvation of joy and love and pleasure.

"The heart is like an instrument whose strings
Steal nobler music from Life's many frets.
The golden threads are spun through Suffering's fire
Wherewith the marriage robes for heaven are woven.
And all the rarest hues of human life
Take radiance and are rainbowed out in tears!"

The first stride toward contentment is made when we turn to what is written on the initial page of the heart and read what is inscribed between the lines. The primary lesson it conveys is the lesson of its own limitations and of its own expansibility. A pocket

rule can measure its dimensions, its length, breadth and depths, but no plummet can sound its capacity. Said an old writer, "The heart is a small thing, but desireth great matters. It is not sufficient for a kite's supper, yet the whole world is not sufficient for it." Yes, the heart of man is so constituted that you may drop into it the whole world and it will not be filled. Yes, crowd it with worlds and all that worlds hold and it will still be empty. Feed to it every created thing and every possible created thing and it will still be hungry.

The history of so many of the great ones who have played chief roles on the stage of the world is the history of starved hearts. To the deluded fancies of the onlooker they may have had everything, yet the cry of their hearts has been, More! More! More!

My dear young friends, why do you lift your sad, envious eyes to the favored women of fortune? What is it that you have not and that you desire? They have independence, you say, and for you there has been nothing but servitude and dependence upon others. You long to be

. . . "A free and fetterless thing—
A wave on the ocean, a bird on the wing."

These creatures fondled in the lap of luxury—you fancy that they are without bond or chain? God help you in your ignorance! If the vision were granted you, the vision of their real condition, you would behold them covered from head to foot with shackles. Tiaras and crowns and pearls and jewels are only plating which hides the aches of heads which they diadem, which smother the sighs of the breasts upon which they rise and fall, which mask the helpless and frenzied clutchings of the hands and fingers they cover. A servitude like theirs it has never been your lot to feel. They are slaves purchased by the world. They are at the beck of the world.

They must think and act and speak as the world bids them. They must subdue everything within them to the world. The negress slave was held in bond in body only. These women are slaves in very soul. Their souls are in vassalage. Such subjection need never be yours. Not for one moment in that dependence against which you repine need you live as thralls. You are not beggars. You work, and your work is noble, and the money you gain is money that is yours by every right and by that high title of labor. Understand your position at its real value, and you are the freest of the free and your independence is genuine liberty. You moan because your hands and feet are weary. Are not these women you are tempted to consider so privileged fatigued and exhausted? How often in the very pursuit of pleasure, in their obedience to the dictates of ceremony and fashion, how often they are, from sheer lassitude, pushed to the very edge of swoon! How often as haggard and drooping they roll by in their equipages, how often they envy the bright eyes and elastic step and cheerful smile of you and your compeers in the busy marts of the workaday world!

Monotony! God grant you have never felt a monotony like theirs! After the monotony of pain there is no sameness like that of pleasure or excess. It is a monotony oh, so stale, so flat and unprofitable. It is a monotony unto loathing and disgust. They have so little relief in the satiety of their existence. They have leaped the bounds of moderation, and the penalty they suffer for their transgression is surfeit unbearable. Soporifics are the remedies they clamor for. You talk of your fatigue, but it is repose compared with theirs. They are blasé, that is, tired of everything. They fling themselves from one dissipation into another lest they remember. They long to forget. They are panting to lose sight of it all. They are weary of looking into weary faces, into insin-

cere eyes, upon treacherous smiles. They are weary of hollow laughter, of dissembling tones. They are weary of the falsehood, of the deception, of the exaggeration, of the equivocation, of the sham of it all. They are weary of the Judas kisses, of the cant, of the crocodile tears, of the perfidy, of the humbug of it all. Their silks, their gold, their pearls are shrouds and bonds and tears.

If you only understood, there would be no hesitation on your part, dear young women, dear young women of the sewing machine, of the typewriter, of the pen, of the yard measure, of the needle, no hesitation whatever as to your choice. Better a thousand years in the factory or the shop or the store, than one day in the tabernacles of the worldlings, of the votaries of fashion, of the scions of high society. This is a matter well worth studying. It will be always true, no matter who has said it, it will always be true:

“Laugh and the world laughs with you;

Weep and you weep alone—

For the poor old earth must borrow its mirth,

It has troubles enough of its own.”

Troubles enough and to spare—troubles to curse. Very few laughs. Never the loud laugh that proclaims the mind that is vacant of cares. Forget not the solemn warning that fell so lovingly from the lips of the Master Workman, of the Master Toiler: “My kingdom is not of this world.” “Peace I leave with you, *my* peace I give unto you: *not as the world giveth*” (John xiv. 27).

X.—HAPPINESS.

Not a single admonition is there to be given to the young woman which has not some reference to happiness. It concerns either the lack or the possession of it. No wonder, then, that it absorbs much attention in any set of talks hoping to be beneficial also to those admirable members of a class, without which the earth would be very much impeded in its progress. If there were no workers to minister to the wants, supposed or otherwise, of the leisure class, how would the latter fare?

There is an interconnection between the upper and lower divisions of society which must never be forgotten, because they must exist, and they can not be disregarded. Providence has wisely shaped things and ends. The situation arises from the very nature of things, and the difference might be bridged over by the spirit of harmony which, in a very short time if permitted to have sway, would beget a mutual understanding that would go very far toward bringing about a betterment of the actual strained condition of affairs. Riches and poverty, labor and capital, leisure and toil are not necessarily antagonistic. A spirit of charity would cover a multitude of mistakes and palliate many grievances. It is well to remember that God is the Father of His vast human family, that we are all His children, and that diversity in material conditions or social environment neither alters nor in any way lessens His special love and solicitude. Every one should remember that:

“Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.”

Every one should be assured that:

“In some time, His time, I shall arrive;
He guides me and the bird,
In His own good time.”

Religion presents as a sterling gift to us all, as an all-satisfying gift, a happiness which is not of this world, which it is not in the power of the world to bestow, and which, when humanity wins, the recipients thereof will be in possession of a bliss that will make flower all the tender blossoms of hope, and which will make amends for the manifold disappointments of life. The world stands on the crossways of existence and greets every passer-by with the promise of a felicity that is to be the reward for the unnumbered sacrifices we make in following its dictates. They are fools who along this road do roam.

“The world has nothing to bestow;
From our own selves our bliss must flow.”

That genuine happiness is fixed to no spot here below even the most eager votaries of fashion must admit. A Godless poet has truly declared:

“Ye seek for happiness—alas the day!
Ye find it not in luxury and gold,
Nor in the fame, nor in the envied sway
For which, O willing slaves to Custom old,
Severe taskmistress! ye your hearts have sold.”

Philosophy, that is the most cultured thought of ancient times, has tried to blaze a way which men might follow and so reach the fountain of youth and the “El Dorado” and the land of heart’s desire. The most consummate expression of this ancient wisdom is probably found among the Stoics. Their views were sometimes, but seldom, based upon a despised and effete mythology, upon a basis as tottering as was the empire of the false gods they adored. Most of their tenets were the outcome of a materialism which by its very nature is too limited in its proportions to satisfy the irrepress-

ible longings of the human heart. Theirs was a doctrine of apathy. They taught, they taught—but, after all, what purpose would it serve to tell you what their doctrines were—they taught the same as, in various ways, was propounded by the philosophers of antiquity and of our own day. They pointed out impossible ways to happiness, ways which were dark and vain, ways which simply threaded explored and unexplored mazes of human experience, ways which traveled nowhere and nowhither save on the confines of this little globe, ways which passed on a dead level through arid wastes, ways which led to gardens wherein was no delight, wherein the fruit broke in ashes upon the lips, ways on which there were only scentless flowers and sterile foliage through the arching roofs of which never penetrated a ray of comforting light, and by which the blue and the sun and the moon and the fixed stars were half dimmed, and gave down no beam telling of the real “Land of Heart’s Desire,” or cheered drooping spirits or refreshed weary limbs or bound up breaking or broken hearts.

All that such teachings tell of is the unsleeping longing for a bliss which it was never in their power to understand or formulate or prescribe for. They lost sight of the primal truth that God made the world, and the rational beings thereof, for Himself. They can never find rest save in following the paths which lead to Him. Not at the ends of any of their journeyings could the beatifying God be reached. Neither God nor His Christ found room in all their theories. Obliterate all their metaphysics, all their ethics, and the world will be none the poorer.

If they have served any purpose, it is this, that men may learn that mere human teaching is very empty, when there is question of solving the riddle of the universe, I mean the human teaching that never soars from the creature to the Creator. With all their mental

acumen, with all their scientific skill, with all their tireless and profound searchings, it would seem that of themselves they would never bring from the depths that pearl of wisdom, this one word of Christ: "Now this is eternal life, that they may know thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (John xvii. 3).

There is the solution of the enigma. It is not in the possession of the world. The world? The poor old world which has grown gray in the pursuit of happiness. The poor old world which is stricken with the weariness of age and decrepitude, running up and down every path, looking for what it has not, for what it never has had, for what it never will have. Hard things have been spoken of the world in which we live. It tosses us about. It jostles us. We are in the welter of it always. We contribute to its upheavals, to its murmurings, to its unrest. We are talking of the world not as God made it—as God made it it is a beautiful book—but of what use is it to him who can not read it? The world, as man disfigured it, is a mass of corruption, a veritable abode of iniquity. It is unwholesome. There is a scent of the grave about it. It smells of death. It is germ-laden. It is an atmosphere pestilential. A myriad bacilli float within it. It reeks with poison. Its miasma enfeebles not bodies only, but minds and hearts. It diseases eyes until they are blind and ears until they are deaf. It is not an atmosphere only, it is also a sea. Sea and atmosphere interpenetrate each other with noisome effluences that choke all healthy moral growth.

Into that sea has been poured every crime since Adam, every sin, every misdemeanor, every imperfection, every wrong thought, every wicked desire, every evil word, every foul deed. From the soul and heart corruption of every individual tributary streams, since the beginning have flowed into that vast sea, and all its currents gravitate in one direction, and all its tides disembogue into the greater ocean of

eternity, where there are only darkness and doom. Verily hard things have been said about the world and against the world. Even its favorite sons and daughters have hurled maledictions upon it.

The poets themselves, the poets of other times and of our own, have indulged in eloquent diatribes against the world and its hollow pretensions. They sing of roses, but the pricking of the inevitable thorns invariably give either a flippant gallop or impart a funereal tone to their verses. They all chant the pleasures of love; they rhapsodize over the seductions of life, but they never forget that the joy of the fleeting hour is darkened by the knowledge of inexorable death. They quaff the golden chalice of existence, but ever remember that the bottom dregs are bitter, and they fling away the bejeweled cup in weariness and disgust. With them hope has a precarious life, youth fades, love droops, the leaves of friendship fall.

"How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable
Seem (to them) all the uses of the world!"

They speak from the ripest experience, and their experience reveals but "the fretful stir unprofitable, and the fever of the world." Their lamentations are monotonous and their one cry is:

"Let not the cooings of the world allure thee.
Which of her lovers ever found her true?"

The fallen archangel is called the prince of this world. This world is his own, his kingdom, and throbs with his evil and lying suggestions. The older the world grows the more evident do all its dangerous characteristics become. It is a wrinkled world, it is an ugly world. Pile up all the epithets which have been fitted to the world and we have a whole literature of scorn, of anger, of repudiation, of vituperation. The accusations so constantly made are a

colossal monument of testimony against the world, and still the wonder grows how it is yet able to wield its fascinating influences over the generations of man. The pity of it is that so many fly to its embrace and feed upon its attractions as if from its withered breast it were possible to drink in anything but the gall of decaying hopes, of aches and smarts, of annoyances, of disquiet and harassing cares and endless vexation of spirit.

The great big ball on which we crawl, and upon which millions have been crawling since the beginning, is an area very extensive indeed. Such a large area is it that many tracts of it, despite the uncountable tribes that people it, are uninhabited and untilled. Take the trackless seas, how many reaches of them have as yet been unfurrowed by any keel, and in their depths have been unvisited by any plummet fashioned or let down by the hand of man? Soar into the empyrean and consider those vast orbs of light, those worlds of vapor and heat, spinning in their imagined grooves and huge in themselves, and traveling at unmeasured distances from each other. Contemplate this immense mass of matter, and in your fancy add thereunto the spaces of earth and ocean, and you will begin to have an idea of dimensions which bewilder and dazzle. Yet these conglomerate worlds hold not in their most hidden nooks, in their unexplored recesses, any spot wherein happiness, as we conceive and hunger for it, can be found. Not all that this marvelous creation, whether of sea or land, or sky, or hill or dale, or forest or glade, may pour of treasures into our laps, will ever fill our hearts with even a year, or a month, or a week, or a day, or an hour, or a minute, or a second of unadulterated content, not to speak of unalloyed bliss.

Take the wings of the morning and follow the day star from its splendor in the east to its dying glories in the west, and at your journey's end will your hearts be unsatisfied and your cravings still

ahunger and the refrain of your disappointed search will be the verdict of the preacher of old. "Vanity of vanities and all is vanity."

It is profitable, my young women friends, to face unflinchingly and honestly this fact. It is well to learn the lesson in your young youth. There is no greater danger for those in your position than the danger of mistaking appearances for reality, the danger of fancying that where the flies are there is always honey, that where the rich and the gay and the gaudy are there is a felicity to be had, which makes the struggling therefor worth the while.

In one of the current magazines the question is asked, "Does it pay to win social prestige?" Two shop girls from the lower district of New York were sitting on a bench in Central Park when a woman well known to social fame rode by in her victoria. She was dressed in the perfection of a designer's thought, wrapped in Russian furs chosen for a crown, carried along by horses that won blue ribbons, with two men on the box whose salaries would enable them to take a superior pose. One girl on the bench said to her companion: "How would it feel to live as she does?" To have nothing to do, everything to wear and to eat, to sleep all day if she wishes, have no duties, not crazy with fear that she will lose her position when times are hard, to have thousands of friends who love her, to buy gorgeous clothes, to come and go as she pleases. "She wouldn't look as if she owned everything and everybody, and have that lovely skin, and those bright eyes, if she had to work eight hours as we do," was the other's comment.

Let me say right here that not all the rich are worldlings and that on the rolls of the saints are the names of many high placed and wealthy. Let me remind you that envy of the rich and the judging of them rashly are sinful.

But this working girl had a wrong notion of things. The woman in the victoria would smile more sadly at this conception than at any other criticism of her life. No, she would not exchange places; she would not go to the sweat shop, to the weaver's seat, to the upright position behind the counter. But would the girl on the bench change either, if she knew? Would she not cling to the factory with its regulation work, its lack of responsibility, its passive acceptance of rules, its holidays, its free evenings, its small wages to meet a small demand? Would she stand the fret, the ambition, the care, the snubs, the quarrels, the contest for supremacy in this colossal, cruel and callous arena, called society? Would she not break her heart in homesickness, for the lunch basket and the dinner whistle?

I think this instance applies to your condition. I think the asking of the question and the reply are full of wholesome suggestion. Both speak for themselves. The little narrative is surely antidotal. I have lingered purposely on this theme of happiness. I wished to underscore some wholesome truths. There is perfect happiness somewhere because the longing for it comes from God, and He will not disappoint us. It has no abode here below. It is beyond the grave. It has no twin sister on this globe. It is of God, and is to be reached only when He holds us fast in fatherly and eternal embrace. There is a foretaste of it possible in time. She possesses it who walks cheerfully in her appointed path. It is within everybody's grasp. It is confined to no individual. It is limited neither to station nor condition. It lies within the command of all who follow the divine will in its application to the details of existence. Next to being perfectly happy, is the being on the road that leads to supreme bliss. This is an estate which all may, if they will, enjoy. It means working and waiting, in sunshine and in gloom, until the shadows

are a little longer grown, until the dial shows the hour of the final summons, until the times comes for the Master to judge and say to the faithful servant: "Well done, enter into the joy of the Lord." It means toiling and moiling in sickness and in health until the beautiful gates come ajar, until the shore of that land is reached where there is a bliss "that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man." I speak of the Mount of Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, where the company of many thousands of angels, and the Church of the first-born who are written in the heavens, the heavenly Jerusalem, where we shall no more hunger nor thirst, neither shall the sun follow us nor any heat.

XI.—CRISES.

Critical moments enter into every life. In the existence of young women these important periods may not be so frequent as in the careers of others, yet I feel emboldened to say that if rarer they are of greater gravity. It has been said by one poet that—

“There is a tide in the affairs of men
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and miseries.”

Another poet more cynically, but no less truthfully, has written that, “there is a tide in the affairs of women which, taken at the flood, leads God knows where.” There are things that matter more in a woman’s life than the same things in a man’s life. There are some doings which a man may live down and from which it is almost impossible for a woman to recover. The critical moments that I refer to are those moments in which when a judgment is made erroneously there results simply a voyage of mistakes.

In these situations a woman may pass from light into a cloud and walk in the darkness forever. Facile is the downward step, but the going back and up is so fraught with labor that the energy breaks down under the difficulty. Every young woman once, at least, in a lifetime is called upon to choose, and her choice made, she must suffer all the consequences thereof. The bed she makes for herself she must lie upon. Very often there is no release save death. There are many young women to-day whose every breath is a sigh and whose every heart-beat is a lamentation for chances unseized, for the wrong path taken, for old ways forsaken, for all the lights of home put out, for all the whiteness of innocence sullied, for roses

choice

changed to thorns, for happiness exchanged for pleasure, for gold bartered away for dross, for lost birthright, for womanhood degraded, for the music of life all hushed, for a whole life made wretched by following an evil suggestion.

A man sobs only, and scarcely ever sheds a tear. A woman's tears are the bitterest drops which fall into the chalice of life.

One of the most pathetic tales ever told is that of the prodigal son, as narrated by the lips of Our Lord. It is harrowing as it begins, and it ends in a song of triumph. The finale is the chant of the first robe and the ring and the banquet. The elder brother stood amazed at the merry-making and the festivities, and words of resentment and remonstrance fell from his lips; but there was only one thought in the mind of the father: "But it was fit that we should make merry and be glad, for this thy brother was dead and is come to life again; he was lost, and is found" (Luke xv. 32).

There is no story of the prodigal daughter. She comes before Christ and is received with terms of pardon and encouragement. We have the Magdalen and the adulteress and the Samaritan woman. But Jesus seems reluctant to present any of the details of their waywardness. Perhaps if He drew the picture the portrait would, in its vividness, be too wretched and degraded for the eye to dwell upon. How repulsive even is the last step of the younger of two sons as it comes before us in the pages of the evangelists! What a contrast between his home and the outhouses of the farm where he fed the swine; what a contrast between the light of other days and the dreary twilight wherein we discover him in the barnyard, when "he fain would fill his belly with the husks that swine did eat and no man gave unto him"!

The hunger of the body is ease and refreshment alongside of the famine of the soul. Dark, indeed, are the colors on this canvas, but

how much more gloomy and lurid are the flashes wherewith is brought out into relief what we know from the testimony of everyday experience is the despair and misery of the woman who leaves the home of her youth and purity to wander up and down life a frenzied thing, until she is picked up in some iniquitous den, or is fished up from some river, whither, in her hopelessness, she has slunk to hide herself away forever from the sight of the sun and the gaze of men. Fancy the sketch of such a career outlined by the pencil of the Master. There is needed no long discussion to convince us that, no matter how unjust it may be, the verdict of the world is heavier against the woman than against the man. One reason is that, low as a libertine may be, debauchery is a more repulsive thing in a woman. The fate of woman in this particular instance seems to be more unkind than equity calls for. Yet may there not be in all this a more robust protection for her? When she learns the depths into which, if ever she become an outcast, she will inevitably plunge, she is naturally impelled to so comport herself that it will be morally impossible for her to become the victim of a misfortune so ravaging and so deplorable.

The Catholic young woman knows where to find her strength. She is aware that her best guardian is her home, with the winning influences of father and mother and brother and sister; that her valiant champion in all vicissitudes is her Church, its teachings, its Sacraments; that an all-powerful antidote for all the poison which the world exhales is to be found in her confessor, than whom there is no stancher friend nor surer guide. How many heroic struggles has he not watched! He has seen so many forced, by circumstances, into an arena vocal with the ravenous cries of wild beasts enraged and bent upon destruction; he has seen them descend therein and baffle the paroxysm of the maddened brutes, and emerge untouched

and unharmed and not a stain on their snowy robes, with the palms of victory in their hands and wearing the white flower of unblemished integrity. He has almost heard the refrain of the choir invisible, of the angels, who could almost envy those maidens and youths upon whose heads is placed a crown which *they* can never wear, and which, in the splendid processions of the saints, adds a new luster to the brightness of the eternal halls.

My dear young women, to you in a special manner did the Master, who loves to feed among the lilies, say on the night of the Last Supper: "I will not leave you orphans" (Luke xiv. 18).

My dear young women, in prayer and purity catch the very faintest echo of the song; catch but one note of that song which is sung by those who follow the Lamb, and upon your ears will sound like discord forever all the music of the world, of pleasure and of sin.

There are many Magdalens in this world to-day. So many that no man can count them. Is there any hope for them? Hope? Aye, an ocean of hope; and that ocean is the fathomless sea of the blood of Christ. In Him is their resurrection. In Him alone; not in men or women. Men sink them deeper into the abyss of degradation. Women? Women, they scorn them and keep aloof from them, and gather up their robes as they pass them by.

There are very few characters in the Gospel so unattractive as the elder brother of the prodigal. In the world to-day there is no role so unenviable as the role enacted by the sisters, younger or older, of the prodigal daughter. Shining conspicuously in the dark places of all lands are those virgins banded together for no other purpose than to lead back to Christ the women who have fallen by the way-side. Theirs is a grand vocation. Christ alone could have devised it, as He alone can impart the courage to follow it, despite the repulsiveness with which it reeks on every side.

I have simply, so far, opened a path which may reveal the principles which are to guide you in the perilous periods of your career. These principles are not many; neither are they abstruse. All may comprehend and apply them. There are two keys which open the gates of heaven. One is gold; the other is silver. But both open them. One key is innocence; the other is repentance. A poet has sung in a foreign language that it is beautiful never to have strayed away from the path of innocence, but more beautiful yet to come back to God by the way of repentance. We can not, of course, admit without qualification this statement; still it emphasizes the fact that to the mountain top there are two roads ever open. In your crisis, therefore, when the moment comes to make an important decision, make it in the light of your innocence. Ask yourselves whether your purity is in any way endangered by the step you are about to take. I might put it in the words of truth, and bid you ask yourselves will it profit unto salvation, requesting you to remember that it will be of no benefit, but will be utter loss, if, while you gain it, you lose your own soul. This test you may always use, no matter what be the course that, at some or other day of your life, is left to your choice. Undoubtedly, while you are framing your purpose, it is wise to have a prudent eye upon your temporal interests. But these must always be weighed in the balance of the sanctuary and they must remain subordinate to the concerns of eternity.

In the present life, the two issues must be considered. If they blend, then liberty of selection is your privilege. If they clash, then the salvation of your soul must override every other motive. With such a principle, your pathway through existence will be a secure one. Abandon it, and whither are you drifting? Turn the light of this principle upon your every-day affairs. Examine in its clear ray your friendships, your work, your amusements. How many

young men and women you will be obliged to blot from the list of your associates! How many places of business, how many kinds of work you will be compelled to shun! How many pleasures you will have to forego! This seems, at first sight, a crushing doctrine. You naturally murmur against it. You ask yourselves, how can you shut nearly every door against yourselves? Take courage, weary hearts. Walk along the narrow path. It will widen after a while. It will not always be the barren, dreary road which it is painted. It will be fringed with the lilies of purity, and will echo with the music of peace and contentment. Pity your sisters who leave it for the wider and the more crowded ways, where all the flowers are weeds, all the fruit ashes and all the music discord. I say, pity them, but never despise them; and above all never refuse to stretch a helping hand out to them.

I feel safe in laying down as a general maxim, which may be called into requisition at all times: Follow your conscience. This conscience of yours, which is ever at hand to threaten and warn you, must be an enlightened, Catholic one. Question your faith in all emergencies. The answer will always be clear and unerring. In doubt, consult your spiritual director, your confessor. In fact, even when your own decision may appear to your own judgment a reliable one, it will never be without profit to manifest your conclusions to your priest.

Regarding the general tenor of your life, regarding what is known in Catholic phraseology by the term vocation, I exhort you to consider it well before you take any irrevocable step. Be not too sure that God does not call you to a religious life. Neither be too sure that He does. A mistaken view in this matter is fraught with danger to your peace of mind as well as to your salvation.

I have no doubt that in married and single life in the world there

are many young women whose place is in the convent ; just as I have no doubt that in sisterhoods there are many who are consuming their souls in solitary wretchedness whom Providence intended to be at least moderately happy outside.

I can assure you of this, that if you are honest with your own souls, with your confessor and with your God no error will be made ; or if there be a misstep, the evil consequences thereof will not be irremediable. Before you embark on any kind of a career consult heaven in the spirit of humble and confiding prayer.

A saint said once that it was his conviction that everybody was called to the religious life, called to the practice of poverty, chastity and obedience. When he was asked what would become of the race in case every one was obedient to this summons, his answer was that the end of the world would arrive, when there would be no need of marrying or giving in marriage.

His opinion is not an infallible one ; it is only an opinion. Yet it serves to make you pause before you abandon absolutely, as not from God, those secret inspirations which, in some of your intimate hours of communing with your Creator, have visited your souls.

I take it that among you the majority will remain in the world, and live therein in blessedness, single or otherwise. I may assume that a very large, perhaps the larger number of you, will some day or other marry and become devoted wives and happy mothers. To keep such a consummation in view, to make womanly efforts to reach it, is a laudable and an honorable thing. Married life is a state which every one has a right to aspire to, and is a condition which God sanctions and His Church blesses. Marriage is a Sacrament, and therefore instituted by Christ to give man and wife the grace to fulfill all the duties which they owe to each other and to those with whom they may be especially charged. It sanctifies the

family, and it generates love in parents for each other and strengthens them to bring up their children in the fear and love of God. It is an institution which contributes much to the happiness and to the misery of the world. While it is all this, it is not to be frivolously sought after, nor is it to be unreasonably shunned. It is the most serious step a young woman has to contemplate. It must not be lightly entered into. While the heart may have its legitimate emotions in the selection of a life partner, the head has a difficult duty and a peremptory one to perform.

A marriage without *heart* presents a cheerless prospect. A marriage which has been contracted without the guiding influence of *reason* presents a prospect scarcely less cheerless. A union effected under the promptings of *heart* and of *head* and of *faith* bids fairest to come nearest to the ideal marriage. The contract is a Sacrament, and therefore holy, and every act preliminary thereunto must share in that sanctity. Let not your hearts run away with your head. Love at first sight may be among the events which occur, but it does not always prove that your match is made in heaven, and it certainly exposes you to the risk of marrying in haste, to repent at leisure. Hence, I say, hold your feelings under control. Be always mistress of yourselves and of the maidenly reserve which is your chiefest ornament and which, in the long run, outlasts the attraction of beauty, which you have had so many chances to learn is skin deep only.

Be not deceived by appearances. Form and figure and elegance and style and comeliness are all desirable possessions; but they are not the whole equipment for the nuptial contract. Far from it! Much, much more is needed. What will stand by you in the dark hours which Time most surely will ring in is not any of these attractions, but character and uprightness and loyalty. These last

are the genuine assets of wedlock. They can always be counted upon. Before you let your heart go out to any man, bring all your shrewdness to help you to understand and to know him. If he is not a Catholic, shun him at once. This you will never regret. Mixed unions are not advocated by the Church; they are tolerated only and for reasons, you may be sure, which are based on long experience of and keen insight into human nature, and for reasons which are inspired by God and by a love for all, even the smallest of His children. If he has any evil habit, again I say, shun him. Is he a drunkard or a dishonest man, or is he a slave to any passion which neither religion nor decency may approve? Again I repeat, shun him.

Marriage is not a reformatory. It may sometimes bring about a change of habits, but where there is question of your life's happiness, this is a contingency too frail for you to stake it upon.

I suppose you have assured yourself that all is as it should be with the young man who has asked you to be his wife; yet, I insist, be slow about your answer.

There is plenty of time to marry, but there is never, and there never will be, time to unmarry.

However you have accepted him, be true to your engagement. From that moment no man has any claim upon you but the one you have promised to marry. Be loyal. Be unsuspicious. Be not the plaything of jealousy. Respect your engagement. Respect yourself. Respect your future husband. True affection will beget this respect, which speaks for itself.

In this way all the steps marriageward will be blessed, and your nuptial day will be one full of good augury for many years of holy bliss.

XII.—CHARACTER.

The sacrifice which a woman makes when she trusts her whole life to the whims and caprices and fancies and likes and dislikes of the man she marries can not be told in words. The unknown sea upon which she trusts the frail vessel of her earthly destiny is full of wild and engulfing storms and of dangers of different, in fact of all, kinds. Wedlock supposes the advent of all the perils to which life is subject. All possibilities are implied and stipulated in the contract. The agreement is for all time. The compact says: "I take thee for my lawful husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do us part."

What an ocean of contingencies, happy and unhappy, it involves. Whether you look at what the woman leaves or what she is entering upon, the prospect is appalling. Hence in the beginning the first nuptial ceremony was presided over by God Himself.

Again in the new beginning under Christ the ceremony became a Sacrament, which signifies not only the presence of God, but the communicating of God to man and woman through the medium of His divine grace. Yea, if the Lord hath not a participation in the contract of matrimony, then untold woes may dog the steps of the newly wedded pair. After His Church, around no institution has He thrown such ample protection as around the institution of matrimony.

Matrimony is an establishment of prime importance to Church and to state, and therefore to humanity at large. As marriages go, so goes the world. Unhappy marriages make an unhappy world; happy ones, a happy world; and holy ones, a moral world.

In this wonderful institution woman is a factor equally essential with man, and to her, by the very nature of things, is committed the noble task of molding the home. Though equal in all right to her husband, she rules the family along with him, yet under his guidance. She must look up to her husband. The family is a society and must have a head, and that head must be the husband. The husband is the head and the wife is the heart. When the union is completed after these maxims it will be readily seen that peace and contentment will brighten everything.

I have said this much about marriage because I look upon every young woman as a possible wife, as in the apprenticeship to wifehood. I believe that it is the duty of every girl to hold herself and to make herself fit for any position she may be called to fill. Let her do her best, and God will do the rest.

For this it behooves her to fashion her character. Character always tells. When I say character I am not considering reputation, but that fundamental SOMETHING which makes all reputation secure, and without which there is no such thing as any but evil repute. I refer to the real worth of the young woman, her innate value, her own undisputed goodness as it appears in the eyes of God and the angels. With this understanding let us endeavor to determine what character is.

In a vague way character is that which distinguishes one from another. It is the outcome of the qualities which an individual possesses. It is her distinctive trait. It is the synonym of oneself.

Says somebody: "Character is like an inward and spiritual grace of which reputation is or should be the outward or visible sign. It is one's personality. It is more. It imports qualities or acknowledged reputation. It means strongly marked traits. It denotes ability and

force of some kind. It is influence for good or for evil. As we use the term when we say: She is a woman of character.

Mark you, I said above influence for good or for evil. As the character is, so the woman is; or, better, as woman is, so is her character. If she is good and strong in the high moral sense, she is a good strong character. If she is bad and strong, she is a bad strong character. I have personified the expression. The individual and her character go together. I feel that if I impress upon you the necessity of forming your character I will have done not a little to help you. If I go a step further, and show you how to fashion your individuality in such a way as to emerge from the process strong and high morally, I will have the consciousness of knowing that I have pointed out a method whereby you may transform yourselves into women ready for emergencies and prepared to meet unflinchingly the storms of life, and to rise above them and beyond into the clearer ether of sunshine and calm.

We have, in the lines of a pagan poet, the delineation of an ideal character as conceived by a heathen: "Not the wild fury of his fellow citizens ordering evil measures to be pursued, not the look of the threatening tyrant, nor the Southern blast, nor the mighty hand of Jove wielding his thunderbolts, shakes from his settled purpose the man who is fast and firm in his resolve."

And since I have referred you to the days before Christ, let me subjoin the opinion of another Gentile of somewhat later date on this subject of character. It will bear repetition. "The highest of characters, in my estimation, is his who is as ready to pardon the moral errors of mankind as if he were every day guilty of some himself, and at the same time as cautious of committing a fault as if he never forgave one." Sure, there is much practical wisdom in this sentence of Pliny the younger. Yet there is one thing that

haunts me continually while I am instructing you. It is that no saying of mine nor listening of yours can complete the upbuilding of your characters. God alone is good. To that fountain you must all repair. Without God you are human only.

Suppose you are the best human being, what does that best amount to? In all times the world has had heroines, but what are all these women compared with the virgins and martyrs, known and unknown, who have glorified the Church? I remember the words of St. Paul: "I have planted, Apollo watered, but God gave the increase. Therefore neither he that planteth is anything, nor he that watereth, but God that giveth increase" (I. Cor. iii. 6).

It is well to bear in mind the wholesome truth that instruction only *shows* the way, but does not put your feet upon it. There are two lives, the merely human and the supernatural. The former at its strongest achieves very little, while the latter decays and crumbles unless it be vivified and sustained by the supersubstantial food of grace. Probably the best definition of character is that given by a German writer. He calls character "a perfectly fashioned will." This is implied in the ideal man of Horace. His great man must be just and firm of resolve. The just man is easily discernible. He gives to every one his due. He fulfils his entire duty, his duty to God, to his neighbor and to himself. He does this not occasionally, but always. No impact unsteadies him. Hence the necessity of a firm will.

The will, therefore, of a woman of character must be inflexible, but inflexible in the direction of virtue. Virtue is the constant and cordial adherence to law wherever it applies and binds. This adherence extends to the deeds, to the desires, to the very thoughts of the individual. It must rest—must this constancy—on the basis of integrity. The highest training is that of the will. As the will, so

the woman. The strong will makes the strong woman. The strong good will makes the holy woman. The strong bad will makes the dangerous woman. The weak will neutralizes all the splendid instincts of womanhood. You see the importance of cultivating the will. This cultivation is imperative. Your conscience is ever appealing to you to hold your will immovable in behalf of what is right. Every deliberate act you perform either weakens or fortifies your will. If your act is not a righteous one, then your will has lost some of its power. It has succumbed. If the deed was a hallowed one, one in conformity with the law, then your will has been, by so much, strengthened.

You are in the arena all your waking hours. Incessantly are you taking or giving blows. Your whole life is a warfare. If you wish it you need never be seriously overcome. Your life is at every instant penning indelibly your record. Nothing escapes the vigilance of the recording angel. Will the final opening of the register reveal victories and nothing but victories? Or will it manifest defeat, calling on defeat and leaving nothing but defeat? Or will it be a mixed report, a report of victories and defeats, but of defeats grandly atoned for by the surpassing victories ending in a triumph blotting out eternally everything like failure. While we aspire to the highest, let us be glad if this last fate be ours.

It will be seen that the most important, as well as the most difficult, task every young woman is called upon to address herself to is the task of shaping her character. This duty would not be demanded of her if its performance was an impossibility. It is within her reach to achieve this. What she desires to be, she can be. It is well for her to know this. An obligation is never forced upon any one which she can not despatch. You have all of you to live along three lines. You are required to be perfect in your attitude toward God,

toward your neighbor, toward yourself. Perfection in these three points results in perfection of character. This will be a beautiful consummation. It will round off your lives as God intended they should be developed.

Wrote an author to a little girl: "My child, I pray your life may be as beautiful as God wished it to be from the beginning." How to go to work to bring this about is not so very hard for the Catholic young woman.

There are women whose names never appear in print. Their lives have no glittering peaks, towering high for the gaze of an admiring world, and yet the level plain of their toil, how rich in strength and usefulness! They do not shine in society, they are the queens of no drawing-rooms, but in their own quiet and sheltered homes they do their tasks with faithfulness, move in ways of homely duty and unselfish serving with sweet patience and gentle cheerfulness. These are the women who are the real heroines, the women of unpraised deeds who—

"Leave no memorial but a world made
A little better by their lives."

The mountain peaks lift their glittering crests into the sky and win attention and admiration, but it is in the great valleys and broad plains that the harvests grow and the fruit ripens upon which the millions of earth feed their hunger. So it is not alone from the conspicuous ones of earth that life's best blessings come, but also from those in humble spheres and in orderly toils who are faithful and patient and true. No words of mine could express more significantly what I call the mission of every one of you, my dear young friends, which is to "put into the dull routine the glory of love, of best effort, of sacrifice, of prayer, of upward looking, of heavenward reaching."

This will make the most commonplace and uneventful lives resplendent with the glory of God. To live such a life is impossible without formation of character. Mind and heart attuned to the highest principles and noblest sentiments make for grandeur of character. These lofty motives, these elevated emotions, you will seek in vain, if you look not for them in the inspiration of your faith. This will teach you how to think, how to decide, how to do. It will not only teach you, but it will strengthen you for the task. This crowning may become the possession of every one of you, no matter how lowly. The Church and the world look to you for this culmination. The king with his scepter is not the only one who rules the world, nor the queen with her diadem. The man with the hoe and the woman with the needle concur thereunto.

The Sacred Scripture lauds and defines the strong woman; that is, the woman of character. "Who shall find a valiant woman? far and from the uttermost coasts is the price of her. The heart of her husband trusteth in her. She will render him good and not evil, all the days of her life. She is like the merchant's ship, she bringeth the bread from afar. With the fruit of her hands she hath planted a vineyard. Her lamp shall not be put out in the night. She hath opened her hand to the needy, and stretched out her hand to the poor. Strength and beauty are her clothing. She hath opened her mouth to wisdom and the law of clemency is on her tongue. She hath looked well to the paths of her house, and hath not eaten her bread idle. Her children rose up and called her blessed: her husband, and he praised her" (Prov. xxxi.). A striking sketch this, and one which, while it compels admiration, incites to emulation.

The saints have reproduced in their womanly lives the charms of these wonderful features. The saintly women, known and unknown, have been all this. The words of wisdom, however, are prophetic,

and they pointed to one woman, the one woman who emancipated her whole sex, and who still beckons them, all and every one, to the heights of purity, whereon she is revealed in glory. The Immaculate Queen is your ideal. Look upon her, and in the radiance of her spotless splendor breathe and move and live.

There is One who is higher than she. One whose winning beauty she reflects. I mean her Son. He is the type. From Him all character flows. He is the light that enlightens every one who comes into the world. As many as received Him, He gave them power to be made the sons of God. Never before or since has there been a character like His. What a mind His was! It, in its human grasp, embraced all truth; that is, all the truth a finite mind bordering on the infinite could hold.

What a heart His Sacred Heart was! It beat as every human heart beats. It throbbed to intensest love and intensest hatred.

Every heart may be tested by what it loves or hates. The Sacred Heart loved the good and the highest, loved every man that was born of Adam. It hated one thing; not any one being, but one thing. That object it hated because it was by its very nature loathsome. It was sin.

What we look for in a grand character is strength and gentleness. Open up the book, the volume of myriad leaves, the volume of the Sacred Heart. How strong! How gentle! Inexorably strong when the exigency compelled, unutterably and condescendingly gentle when love alone stirred. When was love not stirring? In a grand character we look for not only a grand mind and a noble heart, but also for the impress of both of these on outward action. This completes character. Was there a word or a deed of Christ that did not bear the reflex of this mental greatness and this gentleness and strength of heart? What reproach has ever justifiably

been made against His life? It was white and noble and sublime always.

Yes, the most finished of all characters that have shone conspicuously on the stage of human events is the character of Christ.

Now the lesson is complete. You have Mary and Jesus. You may walk through life hand in hand with them. Oh, to bask in the golden sunshine of their presence, leaning on the unconquerable vigor and reposing in the sheltering security of their protection! What other Church is so great as yours that throws around you the mantle of such ample safety! Mind, heart and action are the factors of character. Lift up your thoughts to the heights of the mind of Christ; lay your hearts close to that center which is the glowing focus of all love and strength, the Sacred Heart; act as Christ acted in every emergency of existence. He was poorer than you, toiled more incessantly than you, suffered more poignantly than you—and you will harvest a treasure of thoughts, words and deeds so rich and so rare that multitudes will marvel and take heart and gladly follow in the sweet-smelling fragrance thereof.

At last I have come to the end of the many words which I have made in these chapters to you. I do not know whether I have accomplished much or anything. I proposed to throw some ray of light upon the many difficulties with which you find yourself harassed as you travel along in that great army of the world's workers to which you belong, that army which has been glorified by so many enduring victories, without which the race would be very poor indeed. I aimed not to make you resigned and contented only, but to make you proud, with an honest pride, of your position as toilers.

I desired to impress upon you that your toil could uplift you while you ennobled it. I wished you to be governed by none but the topmost motives. I was ambitious for you because I knew what

miracles of virtue you are performing daily. I pleaded with you to be all you can be, all your Church asks of you to be and which she alone can help you to become.

I hold that the regeneration of the masses will come from young Catholic women who earn their bread in the sweat of their brow. The only path to that reformation lies in the following of Christ and His mother.

Once more, study yourselves and your environment in the light of Catholic teaching, and I do not shrink from guaranteeing you that each and all of you will be in your little sphere a jewel as rich—

“AS TWENTY SEAS, IF ALL THEIR SAND WERE PEARL,
THE WATER NECTAR AND THE ROCKS PURE GOLD.”

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